This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

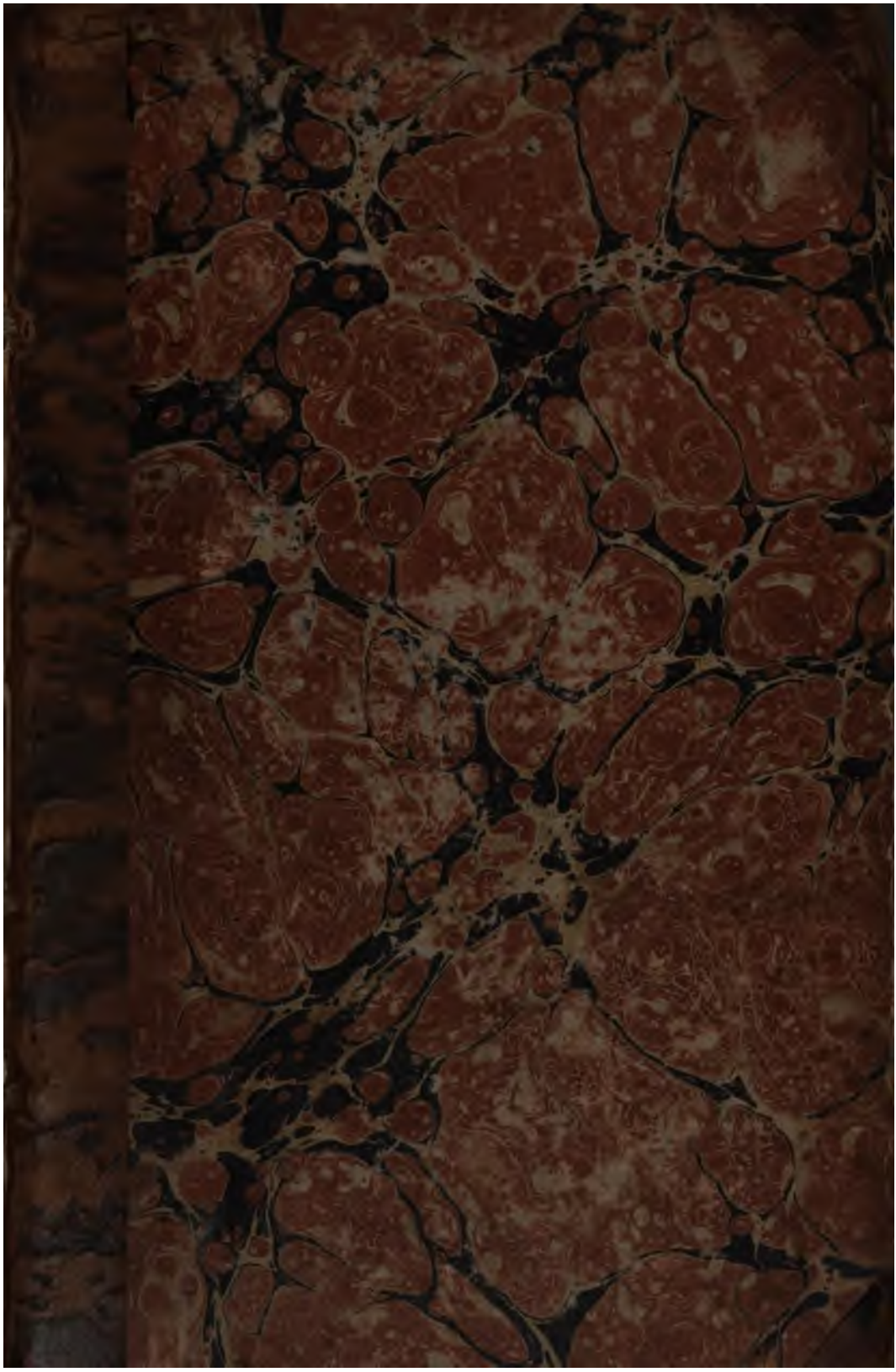
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

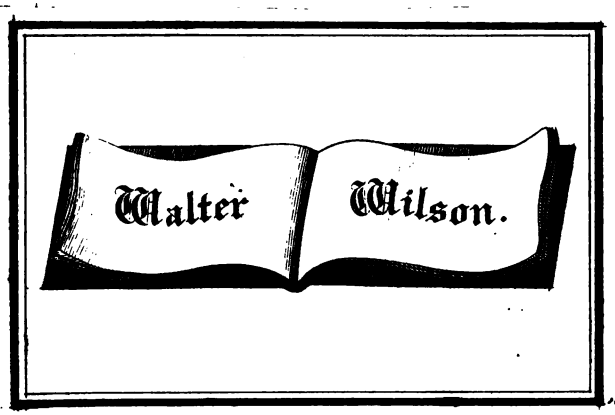
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`




Walter Wilson.

ENQUIRIES

HISTORICAL AND MORAL.

ENQUIRIES

HISTORICAL AND MORAL,

RESPECTING THE

CHARACTER OF NATIONS,

AND THE

PROGRESS OF SOCIETY.

BY

HUGH MURRAY.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY JAMES BALLANTYNE AND CO.

FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME, PATERNOSTER-ROW, LONDON;
AND JOHN ANDERSON, EDINBURGH.

1808.

QL
61
.M98

15-1374

CONTENTS.

Page.

INTRODUCTION 1

BOOK I.

ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH REGULATE THE PROGRESS, AND THE MORAL CONDITION, OF SOCIETY .....

CHAPTER I.

On the Character of Societies 11

CHAPTER II.

On the Progress of Society 16

CHAPTER III.

The Progressive Principles 21

Numbers 22

Communication 31

Wealth 42

Great Public Events 51

CHAPTER IV.

The Repressing Principles 64

The Necessity of Labour 67

Coercion 71

CHAPTER V.

On certain General Modifications of the Progressive Principles 96

CHAPTER VI.

On certain Relations between the Progressive and Repressing Principles 101

CHAPTER VII.

On Knowledge, considered in its Relation to the Progress of Society 103

CHAPTER VIII.

On certain circumstances, upon which National Character has been supposed to depend 139
Climate 140
Race 148
The Oscillatory Tendency in Human Affairs 152
The mode of Subsistence, including some remarks on the Principle of Population 157

BOOK II.

VIEW OF MAN IN THE PRIMITIVE STATE ... 165

CHAPTER I.

Solitary Individuals 171
Characteristics.—Prone posture—Dumb—Inattentive to external objects—Liable to derangement—Harmless—*Examples.* Peter the Wild Boy—The Savage of Aveyron, &c.

CHAPTER II.

Separate Families 182
Characteristics—Deficiency of character—Indolence—Timidity—Gloom—Superstition—Selfishness—Sensuality—Equality of Sexes—Free-

dom from crimes—*Examples.* The Laplanders and Samoiedes.

CHAPTER III.

A few Families United 193

Characteristics. Amiable character—Kind and affectionate dispositions—Absence of Coercion—Reverence for old age—Industry—Religious character—*Examples.* Village visited by Perouse—St Kilda—Quirini's island—St John—Tribes in a mixed state—Pesherays—Van Diemen's Land—Nicobar islands—Greenlanders—Esquimaux—Tchinkitanyans—Ostiaks—Argippœi and Hyperborei.

BOOK III.

VIEW OF MAN IN THE SAVAGE STATE 221

View of the Progressive Principles, as operating in the savage state—Causes of savage ferocity—Suffering—Display of prowess—Revenge.

CHAPTER I.

Imperfect Division into Tribes 230

Characteristics. Individual quarrels—Duelling—Inhuman treatment of women—Dishonesty—Want of religious ideas—Superstition—*Examples.* Botany Bay—Northern Indians—Tunguses—Port des Français—Navigators' islands.

CHAPTER II.

Small free nations 252

Characteristics. War—Mode of conducting it—Torture — Cannibalism — Savage trophies—Fortitude—Internal union—Politeness—Gene-

rosity—Hospitality—Friendship—Apparent apathy—Purity between the sexes—Treatment of women—Intellectual character—Religious character—Drunkenness—Love of finery—Gaming—*Examples.* Iroquois—Caribs—Brazilians—New Zealand—Tanna, Mallicollo, and New Caledonia—Ancient nations—North Spain—Troglodytes—Scythians—Caledonians—Mixed tribes—Californians—Indians on the Oroonoko—Hottentots—Kamtschadales.

CHAPTER III.

Small Despotisms 326

Wide diffusion of this form of government—Singular change from the foregoing—Causes—Authority gained by personal qualities—by benefits conferred—by religious veneration · Establishments formed by Jesuits—by Quakers—*Characteristics.* Devotion to chiefs—More pacific character—Amiable manners—Industry—Licentiousness—Condition of women—Amazons—Thieving propensities—Religious character—*Examples.* Natches—Florida, Virginia, &c.—Nootka—Marquesas, Pelew, Friendly, and Sandwich Islands—Otaheite—Ladrones—Easter Island—Giagas and Ansicans—Boshuanas—Ancient Britain—German tribes—Royal Scythians—Troglodytes—Early Greece—Cyprus—Conclusion of the Savage state.

INTRODUCTION.

THE history of man, of the various aspects and forms under which he presents himself, is a subject which has engaged the attention of many distinguished writers. It may be considered in many points of view; as relating to laws, to arts, to manners, to political regulation, and to other objects of equal importance. Some writers have extended their plan to embrace all these indiscriminately; while others, with more prudence perhaps, have appropriated to themselves detached portions of so extensive a field. But I do not know of any who have confined their attention to the *moral* history of man,—to the manners and character of nations, and the circumstances on which these are dependent. Yet the importance of this branch of the subject will not be denied; and it appears to me, that it is only by consider-

ing it separately from every other, that we can ascertain, with precision, the causes, upon which its varied phenomena depend.

To those who have been in the habit of attending to this subject, it will immediately appear, that such an enquiry must be conducted with reference to man, as a *progressive* being. Among the lower animals, the general distinctive qualities remain invariably the same; every succeeding generation is exactly similar to that which preceded it. But the aspect of human society is continually changing: it is continually becoming more numerous, more splendid, and more civilized. Particular nations may have remained for a long time stationary; nay, some have even experienced a temporary retrogradation; still, however, the general progress made by the species has certainly been as above described. In modern Europe, above all, (the part of the world with which we are more immediately connected,) it has arrived at such a height, and is going on with such unprecedented rapidity, as imperiously to force itself on our attention. After viewing society, then, as perpetually improving in its external aspect, a more important question arises.

What effect does this change produce on man, considered as a moral and intelligent being? Does it render him really wiser, better, or happier? Is it a tendency which the legislator ought to encourage, or an evil which he ought to check?

It must here, however, be admitted, that the science, to which this enquiry conducts us, does not, in a practical view, altogether possess that high importance which we might, at first sight, expect. The deeper we penetrate into the subject, the more shall we be convinced of the limited power of human efforts. All the great processes carried on in the moral world, will appear to be less dependant on individual exertion, and more on general laws, arranged, with consummate wisdom, by a power superior to human. Yet, after every deduction on this ground, sufficient encouragement will still remain for the prosecution of this science. Even in a mere speculative view, it deserves to rank above some of those which have been most highly esteemed;—above, for example, that of astronomy. It belongs to a higher department in the system of nature, and exhibits, amid apparent confusion, the same symptoms of grand and be-

neficent design. But as a practical science, too, it deserves to rank high. It affords elements, which ought to be taken into the account by all those who touch the great springs, by which human affairs are moved. Though they can hope to promote these objects only in a moderate degree, and in complete subserviency to the designs of the Author of Nature, yet they may certainly learn, not to waste themselves in fruitless efforts to oppose them. The first effects of any change are so different, nay frequently so opposite to those which it is ultimately destined to produce, that the short-sighted legislator is perpetually liable to this error. This science may instruct him of the period when society is ripe for any particular improvement; may guard him against premature and misplaced alteration; and may enable him to strike the medium between a superstitious attachment to what is ancient, and a tendency to rash innovation. This medium, indeed, has been hitherto struck, better than might have been expected, by the struggles between contending parties; the rashness and precipitancy of the one, being corrected by the timid caution of the other. The perfecting of this

science, however, may enable it to be settled in a surer and milder manner. By shewing to every society the place which they occupy in the great chain of human things, it may instruct them in what they owe, both to past and to future ages. I am inclined also to think, that, as society advances, men will be expected to acquire more and more of this knowledge. We see, that in the case of the individual, previous to his attaining the age of maturity, nature, independently of his own efforts, has provided for his safety and preservation, but after that period has entrusted them to his own care; and it seems not improbable, that the destination of the species may be somewhat similar.

In that part of the science which relates to the character of particular societies, as the objects lie within a smaller compass, they are more within the sphere of individual action, and acquire a higher degree of practical importance. And it will, I think, appear hereafter, that the same circumstances which regulate the progress of society in general, regulate also the moral and political character of each particular community. The two subjects may therefore be treated together,

and form, when combined, an outline of the moral history of the species.

The foundation of such an enquiry seems likely to be best laid, by taking a general view of the various characters which man has assumed in the different stages of his progress. But as the detail of society and manners in every particular tribe would be both tedious and unprofitable, a necessity arises for arranging, into classes, those which agree in their general characters. The general division of societies into savage, barbarous, and civilized, which seems to have spontaneously suggested itself, may still be retained to a certain degree. But, in order to trace with any precision the varieties of national character, it has appeared necessary to make a more minute distribution, founded upon those principles which act upon the moral nature of man. And in order to pave the way for this arrangement, it will be necessary to institute a previous enquiry into the nature of these principles, and the manner in which they operate. Such an investigation will be interesting in itself, and it may furnish a clue to guide us through the mazes of so intricate and extensive a subject.

In the present volume this plan is completed, so far as relates to the earlier and ruder periods of society. This part of the subject, already of sufficient extent, is so far detached from the rest, as to be capable of forming a work by itself. How far it will be in the author's power to extend a similar survey over the succeeding stages, as well as to prosecute other enquiries connected with his original object, must depend upon circumstances which cannot with certainty be foreseen. Before engaging in such a long course of meditation and research as would still be necessary, it may be desirable to know, whether any value will be attached to the result. And as it is upon the principles contained in this volume that all subsequent speculations must rest, it may be advantageous, before raising the superstructure, to give the public an opportunity of examining into the foundation.

BOOK I.

ON THE

CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH REGULATE THE PROGRESS AND THE MORAL CONDITION OF SOCIETY.

CHAP. I.

ON THE CHARACTER OF SOCIETIES.

BEFORE we advance farther into these speculations, it will be proper that we endeavour to form a distinct idea of the object to which they relate; of the nature of those ideas which we annex to the words "national character," or "the character of societies."

On taking a view of any number of men, who are united by the same common government, language, and habits of life, we immediately discover moral peculiarities, as clearly discernible as the varieties of feature by which the different races of men are distinguished. To these we give the name of national character. Even among the nations of Europe, whose progress in civilization nearly approaches that of each other, this distinction is very decisively

marked. But it becomes far more evident, when we consider man in his progressive state; when we contrast the naked savage, traversing the woods in quest of prey, with the opulent and polished inhabitant of an European city. The difference is here so wide, as to make it, at first sight, difficult to recognize the same common nature in each. A similar distinction exists between the different classes into which a numerous and complicated society is divided. The fashionable circles, and those in humble life; the votaries of each particular profession; the inhabitants of the city and country; all exhibit marked shades of difference, which are stronger in proportion to the number of classes, and to the little intercourse which subsists between them.

It may, I conceive, be laid down as a fundamental principle, that between any two great portions of the human species, (whatever be the age or country to which they belong,) there exists no radical distinction; that the total amount of moral and intellectual endowments, originally conferred by nature, is altogether, or very nearly, the same; and that the wide dif-

ferences which we observe, arise wholly from the influence of external circumstances. * Few, probably, of those who have been accustomed to take an extensive survey of human affairs, will be disposed to dissent from this statement. For them it may be considered, as expressing a proposition, the proof of which is attempted in the following pages. Should it appear just, it will follow, that original constitution, which forms so essential an element in the formation of individual character, is not at all to be taken into the account in treating of the character of societies; which forms an essential distinction between those two subjects of enquiry.

This general character, it must be observed, can with no propriety be considered as applying to every individual without distinction. When we say that a nation is honest, we merely say, that it contains a greater number of honest men, a greater amount of honesty upon the whole, than most other nations. And

---

* A slight limitation of this maxim will be noticed under the head of *Race*.

the same will hold in regard to every other moral quality.

Neither will this general resemblance among the members of a society, in any case extend so far, as to obliterate the distinctions of individual character. On having first brought under our view a number of individuals, between whom any similarity exists, this similarity is the first thing with which we are struck. One character seems then to pervade the whole groupe. But in consequence of a longer acquaintance, numerous and striking differences are discovered. Thus, the shepherd distinguishes clearly between the individuals that compose his flock, which to others appear nearly alike. Much more will this take place in regard to man, a being whose nature is more complicated, and examined with more curious attention. There is therefore no reason to apprehend, that the greatest refinement of manners will induce any insipid and monotonous uniformity. After the rougher and coarser distinctions are smoothed away, a variety of minute shades, before unperceived, begin to unfold themselves. Perhaps there is no single form, either of mind or of organized matter, which

exactly resembles another. Nature is no less inexhaustible in her variety, than wonderful in her uniformity; in that combination of generic resemblance, and of individual distinction, which runs through every department of her works.

CHAP. II.

ON THE PROGRESS OF SOCIETY.

In forming any general conclusions, the most natural and pleasing order of ideas is that by which we begin with particulars, and ascend, through them, to the general result. But though this ought always to be the process carried on in the mind of the enquirer, it cannot always be adopted with advantage in the communication of his ideas. Where the facts are numerous and complicated, as is peculiarly the case in the present instance, such a method would lead to inextricable confusion. It then becomes necessary to begin with stating the conclusion, and afterwards to illustrate the train of induction from which it has been inferred.

Before explaining, however, the general principles, which, after long and attentive considera-

tion, have appeared to me to regulate the progress of society, it may be proper to state, that, to the best of my judgment, I have not been swayed by any love of paradox; nor was I conscious of any wish, by a preposterous eclectic system, to form an alliance between opinions really incompatible. My present views upon this subject were not favourite ones, nor those with which I originally set out. They were formed at a very advanced stage of these enquiries, and after most of the facts relating to them had been collected. It then appeared, that these facts could be accounted for by this hypothesis only, and were wholly inconsistent with any other.

With regard, then, to the process above alluded to,* there is, I think, every reason to trust, that its effects will be ultimately and greatly beneficial. But this improvement is certainly far from being regular and constant; nay, there are many circumstances which would lead us to a conclusion directly opposite. We daily observe, that poor and rude nations are often more vir-

* See page 2.

tuous than the opulent and civilized; that often, nay, generally, as nations advance in wealth and prosperity, their morals are corrupted instead of being improved. Upon the whole, it almost appears to me, *that there is, in human society, a process of corruption, previous to the process of improvement, and arising from the first operation of the same causes;—and that every thing, which ultimately tends most to improve the character and condition of man, is positively injurious in its first operation.* *

We discover in those who live remote from the splendid and crowded scenes of human life, a certain rude simplicity and native innocence, which, when contrasted with the numerous vices and disorders that spring up in a more advanced stage, merit a decided preference. The atmosphere of great cities has been always branded as pestilential to innocence. In the young and inexperienced, who are transported thither from a scene of rural retirement, a process of corruption rapidly takes place. Courts, cities, camps, the

* The word *first* must here be understood under certain modifications, which will be explained hereafter.

great and crowded scenes of human life, have always abounded in violent passions, and vicious indulgences.

Nations, as they advance in numbers and wealth, are commonly found to become more dissolute and immoral. Now, generally speaking, in consequence of principles deeply implanted in human nature, an increase in these particulars is continually taking place. For some time, therefore, there is, as it were, a continual progress downwards, a perpetual multiplication of vices and disorders. And this effect would be still more evident, were it not for the influence of certain restraints, which are seasonably brought into action. After a certain period, however, new principles operate. From amid this chaos, order begins to arise; a gradual refinement takes place; arts, sciences, and philosophy, rear their head; which, though in their imperfect and *crescent* state, they may tend rather to increase the disorder, yet, when improved and perfected, seem destined to raise the human race to a condition much superior to that rude simplicity from which they had emerged. This improvement springs up, as it were, in the bosom of the pre-

ceding corruption, and, for a long time, co-exists along with it. At first almost insensible, it prevails more and more, till there seems reason to hope, that it may at last attain a very considerable ascendency.

CHAP. II.

THE PROGRESSIVE PRINCIPLES.

THE view which I have now given, is, I think, sufficiently consonant to the general aspect of history, and of human things. At the same time, to establish it by a sufficient induction, as well as to make the proper applications, a much greater detail will be requisite. The first object, as already stated, must be to enquire, what these circumstances are, which thus produce corruption in the first instance, and ultimate improvement; and to ascertain the manner in which they operate. To these, for the sake of conciseness, I shall give the name of PROGRESSIVE PRINCIPLES. The following, I think, are the most remarkable:

I. Numbers collected into one place.

II. Free communication between different societies, and different members of the same society.

III. Wealth.

IV. Great public events.

Two others, and those of the greatest importance, might be added, viz. Freedom from the necessity of labour; and, Freedom from coercion. But as these possess rather a negative character, it appears to me more philosophical to refer their *opposites* to a different class of principles; of which I shall treat in due time.

I.—*Numbers collected into one place.*

That this circumstance has a powerful tendency to produce moral corruption, seems confirmed by the universal consent of mankind. Such a general impression, in a case thus obvious to every one's observation, affords a stronger proof than the most laboured induction. The city, where multitudes are crowded together, has been universally found to teem with every

species of disorder; while the country has been celebrated as the abode of innocence and primitive simplicity. All those passions, which in their excess become crimes; the love of power, the love of distinction, the licentious pursuit of pleasure, are, amid great assemblages of men, cherished and stimulated. The benevolent affections, which could embrace every member of a small and secluded circle, are chilled by the variety of objects which press on them. In every operation of an assembled multitude, the lead is generally taken by the most violent, the most daring, the least scrupulous, in short, by the worst.

In all places where a great number is collected together,—public schools, manufactories, very numerous popular assemblies,—the effects are uniformly found to be injurious. A mob, most of whose members, when confined to their domestic sphere, were perhaps quiet, peaceable, and industrious, soon become turbulent and furious, when their passions are inflamed by the presence of a multitude. They become incapable too of forming any sound and deliberate

judgment, rash, credulous, hurried along by every impulse of the moment.

As the meeting of persons ill affected towards each other is naturally a signal for quarrels, so that of friends is generally supposed to authorize a more than ordinary indulgence in sensuality. And rude natures, when once provided with the means of gratification, will seldom be found to keep within due limits. Great collections of people, formed either for business or amusement, markets, festivals, public rejoicings, are seldom unaccompanied by intoxication and excess.

A curious illustration of this principle may be seen in the direction which it gives to that universal passion, the love of distinction.

There is a strong desire in man to be the object of general attention to the society in which he lives. This propensity meets with easy gratification amid a small circle, each of whose members must be an important object in the eyes of the rest. All that is required of a man in such a situation, is, that he should do nothing to forfeit that attention which others are disposed to pay to him. But in the numerous so-

ciety of a great city, every individual becomes, as it were, nothing; he is lost, like a drop of water in the ocean. The only means of escaping from this mortifying insignificance, is to find some mode, either of rising above, or at least of separating himself from, the surrounding crowd. But a superior degree of truly valuable attainments is always laborious, and can fall to the lot of only a few. Distinctions, therefore, are sought after, adventitious at least, if not absolutely dishonourable; and they are pursued with an immoderate eagerness, which of itself tends to vitiate the character. Hence the crowd of follies which spring up in a great city: hence men glorying even in their vices; anxious to be distinguished for any thing, rather than to remain in obscurity.

I have already noticed the general impression which prevails upon this subject; an impression formed not with a view to any particular theory, but arising immediately from the observation of human life. Peculiar stress is here to be laid on the sentiments of the earlier moralists, who lived at a period when the corrupting process was already far advanced, while that of improvement

had scarcely begun to shew itself. Among these, solitude, and the shades of retirement, have been always extolled, as the surest safeguard of innocence. Hence, in every age, those, who wished to shun the temptations of life, and to devote themselves to heaven and to virtue, have sought the seclusion of the cloister and the hermitage. Doubtless, this propensity has been carried too far; yet its prevalence seems clearly to indicate the general conviction of the favourable influence of retirement upon human conduct.

This principle seems injurious, in the first instance, not only to the moral, but also to the intellectual character of man. The proverb, that "in a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom," doubtless contains much truth; yet its application depends much on the nature of these counsellors. Where they are ignorant and clamorous, the very opposite effect follows. In a numerous assembly, the passions are kindled; a multitude of contradictory opinions dazzles and confounds, rather than enlightens the judgment; and nothing remains of that deliberate calmness, which is necessary for just and candid decision. The wis-

dom of a deliberative assembly is often found to be in the inverse proportion of its numbers.

The small number of objects which present themselves in a narrow circle, has no tendency to inspire enlarged views, or philosophical habits of thinking. But it is favourable to the exercise of native intuitive good sense. These few objects are suited to the limited faculties of the untaught mind; their various aspects and relations may be embraced with ease, and without confusion. As they multiply, the understanding which has not learned to enlarge its views, and to generalize, is bewildered and lost.

We have thus found, that the collection of numbers is hostile to that simplicity of character which rests upon moderate passions, and the absence of temptation. But it is at the same time indispensable to the formation of that more improved character, which consists in fixed principles, extensive views, and high intellectual cultivation. It is essential to the production of all those arts which refine and exalt human nature. The emulation, kindled by assembled numbers, becomes the source of excellence in every department. Even that violence of the passions,

and the activity to which it prompts, while it is the source of present disorder, leads ultimately to improvement. The periods of history most pregnant with guilt and suffering, are also those which afford the most instructive and important lessons to future times.

To the perfecting of moral judgment, the existence of numerous societies is peculiarly subservient. It is equally so, whether we consider this judgment as intuitive, or as derived from a view of the ultimate tendency of human actions. The lover of the arts, by contemplating a variety of models, learns to distinguish with certainty between beauty and deformity; and it is by a similar process that a correct moral taste must be formed. And the bustle and activity to which this assemblage gives rise, by presenting human nature under a variety of aspects, must greatly extend these means of observation. A variety of examples being thus presented, of the opposite nature of virtue and vice, the distinction between them will be clearly perceived, and the superiority of the latter will be gradually acknowledged. The criterion of virtue, too, which is founded on its tendency to promote the gene-

ral welfare, is evidently to be ascertained by that wide observation of human nature which can be made only in a numerous society. Such attempts, founded upon narrow and partial views, must be altogether erroneous. But the more, in consequence of an extensive acquaintance with mankind, we enlarge our views of the consequences of human actions, the more evident are the marks of that close connection, which exists between the virtue and the happiness of man.

These views are, I think, fairly deduced from general and ascertained principles of human nature. At the same time it must be owned, that, on a cursory view, this latter part of the process (the tendency to improvement) is less obvious than the other. Its advance is gradual and insensible; and as new sources of corruption are continually opening, through the augmentation of numbers, wealth, and intercourse, (always injurious in the first instance,) the two processes are so mixed and blended, that to separate them becomes a very complicated operation. It will be, at present, more easy and more satisfactory to consider the influence which the progressive principles produce upon the cultivation of the

arts and sciences; the grand instrument which nature employs for effecting the improvement of man, considered as a moral and intelligent being. And here two questions occur: How far do the progressive principles lead to the successful cultivation of the arts and sciences? And how far does this successful cultivation lead to the improvement of the moral nature of man? The latter question, as being of the last importance in the history of man, is reserved for full consideration at a future period. A very few observations may be sufficient to illustrate the former.

The formation of cities is coeval with the origin of all those arts, which relate either to external elegance, or to mental improvement. There only we meet that refined taste, that active emulation, and those wide views of society, without which no great writer can be formed. Athens, Rome, Florence, Paris, London, have been all large cities, most of them of the first magnitude. This effect does not, indeed, take place in any exact proportion to the population; nay, there are cities of equal or greater extent, in which it does not take place at all. That circumstance is not

alone sufficient; nor, indeed, is any single principle ever sufficient. But it is an indispensable requisite. While men roved in tents, or dwelt in scattered and thinly inhabited villages, they might acquire talents of various kinds: they might display skill and activity in the conduct of life. But with the individual all these attainments perished; nothing was done for the species. It is in cities, amid great assemblages of men, that science first strikes its roots, and is thence diffused over other parts of the world.

II.—*Free Communication between different Societies, and different Members of the same Society.*

In order that the assemblage of numbers may exert its influence, some degree of communication is necessary; and the magnitude of its effects is generally in proportion to the closeness and frequency of this communication. We may conceive a case, (and something approaching to it does actually take place in the capitals of some

great Asiatic empires,) where an immense multitude may be collected within the walls of a city, yet each family be as completely insulated, as if separated from the rest by an immense distance. In other cases, where the absolute population is exceedingly small, the constant and intimate intercourse between individuals enables it to produce a powerful progressive influence.

For these reasons, communication between persons placed in similar circumstances belongs rather to the subject of the preceding Section. That of the present may be more properly confined to the intercourse which exists between individuals and societies, whose habits and character are different.

The immediate effect of mixing with persons of very various habits and modes of thinking seems to be, that of unsettling the principles upon which a man had previously acted, and thus depriving him of any fixed standard of conduct. Even thinking men, bewildered by the various and contradictory systems of moral judgment adopted by different ages and nations, have doubted the existence of any real and permanent

standard, and have considered it as the mere creature of habit and education.

It is a general observation, that knowledge of the world, (which consists chiefly in free intercourse with men of various habits and professions,) though it may increase a man's ability, and forward his success in life, is at least extremely dangerous to his moral principles. The young heir, who, without any fixed character, sets out on the tour of Europe, generally returns fully accomplished in all the vices of the countries through which he has passed, but with a very small share of whatever is laudable.

This corruption varies in its nature, according as the new connection is productive of pleasure, or uneasiness. In the latter case, whether individuals or nations are concerned, it uniformly gives rise to the most malignant passions; to jealousy, distrust, and aversion. Hence the deadly hatred which reigns between persons of narrow views, who, while they differ in manners, or in political and religious opinion, happen, at the same time, to be members of the same society. Each, regarding the manners to which he has been accustomed as the sole standard of rectitude,

views with abhorrence every deviation from them. Among rude tribes, the terms of stranger and enemy have been generally synonimous.

In the opposite case, where the connection is productive of mutual pleasure, the intercourse is doubtless amicable; but it gives, at the same time, a powerful impulse to folly and sensuality. Each party is thus brought acquainted with modes of licentious indulgence, which wear for him the gloss of novelty, and which none of his previous habits have enabled him to withstand. He generally, therefore, not only adopts, but carries them to a much greater excess than those, who, from previous acquaintance, had learned to use them with more moderation.

The most decided criterion of the immediate effects arising from this intercourse, seems to be afforded by that, which, in consequence of extended navigation, has taken place between the civilized nations of Europe, and the savage inhabitants of America and the South Sea. The two extremes of society have thus been brought into contact. Now all navigators and travellers agree, (so far as I know, without a single exception,)

that the effect produced upon the character of these tribes is decidedly pernicious; that they have adopted and carried to excess all the vices of their foreign visitors, without learning one of their good qualities. It seems, indeed, to efface from their minds every idea of the distinction between right and wrong. Thus, most of these people were strictly honest, and even liberal, among themselves; but their conduct towards Europeans formed one continued scene of cheating and roguery. Fired with the fiercest avidity for European commodities, they scrupled at no means, either of violence or fraud, by which they might obtain them. Female virtue, also, even when valued among themselves, was sacrificed without scruple in this new connection. *

And that the injury is reciprocal, the annals of the New World too abundantly testify. The splendid objects, exaggerated by novelty, which were presented to the eyes of the first adventu-

---

* Charlevoix Hist. de la Nouvelle France, VI. 31. Lafutai Mœurs des Sauvages, I. 107. Cook's Second Voyage, I. 130. Missionary Voyage, Prelim. Dis. 31. Turnbull's Voyage, III. 24. &c. &c.

rers, fired them with an unbounded lust of wealth; while the difference of manners and appearance made the natives be regarded as beings of an inferior species, and consigned, without remorse, to tortures, slavery, and death. Horrors were committed, which no pen can describe; and hardly, throughout the wide extent of Asia, Africa, and America, is there any shore, which European ambition has not deluged with blood. Happily, indeed, a better order of things has now begun to arise; but it is only the first result of this connection to which our attention is at present called.

Yet communication, though thus pernicious in its first effects, becomes ultimately one of the prime sources of human improvement. To rouse the mental powers, and inspire an active emulation, it is not enough that a man be brought into contact with other individuals, whose situation and habits are the same with his own. The uniformity of such a scene leaves still the mind too torpid and inactive. But the contemplation of mind in a variety of aspects, the view of different habits, manners, and opinions, at once set the thinking powers in motion, and furnish them

with ample materials on which to act. They free the mind from the chains of inveterate habit. By destroying that blind submission which a man was disposed to pay to the prejudices of country and education, they lead him to form his judgment upon rational and systematic principles. Out of the variety of habits and opinions which are thus presented to him, he will probably learn at last to select those which are best; or, which is still better, will be enabled to trace them by the efforts of his own mind.

If we consider the effect of this principle upon literature and the arts, we shall soon perceive its influence to be powerful, beyond, perhaps, that of any other. In all those ages which receive the appellation of *classic*, it will be found existing in the highest activity.

We have only to cast our eyes upon the map of Greece, to perceive how completely nature has divided it into a variety of separate communities. It is entirely broken down into islands and peninsulas; intersected by rivers, mountains, straits, narrow seas, all those barriers by which nature separates nations, without widely disjoining them; which, while the means of artificial

communication are yet imperfect, form insurmountable obstacles to the union of different states into one; but not to such an occasional, and even frequent, intercourse, as may conduce to their mutual improvement. Another cause is afforded by that spirit of emigration, animated by which, Greece, during her earlier ages, poured numerous colonies upon the fertile shores of Italy and the Lesser Asia. All these states, spread to such an extent, and shooting into such a variety of forms, were still united by the same name, the same origin, and the same language; which last circumstance, in particular, must have powerfully facilitated the communication of ideas. Greece, therefore, (under which name I would comprehend Peloponnesus and the shores of the Ægean Sea,) had under her immediate eye, as it were, every various aspect under which it was possible for man to be viewed. Within herself, the rude and simple Arcadia; the stern and hardy Lacedemon; the lively Athens; the voluptuous Corinth. On one side, the splendid and opulent cities of Græcia Major and Sicily; on the other, the refined and effeminate Ionia. Immediately beyond lay Egypt, an ancient and

great people, among whom religion, laws, and government, were first formed into a regular system, and were delivered over to Greece to be refined and perfected. Persia presented a military despotism, and barbarous luxury. To the north, the boundless forests of Scythia and Thrace, exhibited a view of man in his simplest and rudest condition. To Greece, as to a common centre, ideas flowed from all these various sources.

Rome, at the time when her genius was at its height, held intercourse with all nations of the known world, either as subjects, as allies, or as enemies. Her great men, engaged in continual missions to the different provinces of her empire, returned laden with the arts and luxuries of every climate; while the princes or people over whom their dominion extended, were sending continual embassies, either to court or to purchase her favour. Greece, where all the schools of learning were then centered, was visited with peculiar frequency. It was by studying its writers, and listening to its teachers, that her most illustrious writers prepared themselves for the business of the commonwealth.

The sphere of Roman observation was wider. Besides all the countries with which Greece was connected, it included the coast of Africa, then covered with splendid and flourishing cities, Spain, and the northern kingdoms of Europe. The communication, however, was not so close, or so intimate. The nations of Italy, with whom alone she came into immediate contact, either originally resembled the Romans, or had been moulded, by long subjection, into a similar character. To this circumstance it may be partly owing, that Roman literature, while it maintains a more uniform and dignified character, fails of exhibiting the variety and versatility of Grecian genius.

The states of modern Italy were in a situation so very similar to that of Greece, that there can be less occasion to enlarge on them. Rome, Florence, Venice, Naples, Ferrara, were states all differing in manners and government, yet all united by the ties of country and language. Her political, and still more her ecclesiastical condition, gave rise to an almost perpetual intercourse with every other kingdom in Europe. Italy, too, had the rare felicity of collecting the

last lights of science, which were just extinguishing in the west; and which found refuge here, in their flight from the terrors of Mahometan desolation.

The states of modern Europe have enjoyed a greater extent of intercourse than was known to any of the nations of antiquity. They form within themselves a considerable number of nations, differing in manners, government, and national character, yet holding frequent intercourse, and connected by certain common principles of union. If they do not lie so close together as in Greece and Italy, this disadvantage is compensated by the improved means of communication. We may add the great extension of maritime intercourse, by which new worlds, and new forms of society, have been opened, whose existence was not even suspected at any former period.

On naming France and England, it must immediately occur, that these are the states which have extended their connections most widely, both with the rest of the European commonwealth, and with other parts of the world. The position of the former is peculiarly happy. In

the very centre of Europe, she had for her immediate neighbours all the four nations most distinguished for power and civilization. The busy and diplomatic character of her court, with the universality to which the language had attained, led her to avail herself to the utmost of these advantages. England, it is true, stands more in a corner of Europe; but this has been compensated both by variety within herself, and by the wide diffusion of her maritime intercourse.

III.—*Wealth.*

There is no point on which men are more completely agreed, than with regard to the corrupting influence of Wealth.

The immediate effect of the possession of wealth, is to stimulate to an unbounded indulgence in sensuality. It naturally produces an eager desire of pleasure; and, among a rude people, the pleasures of sense alone have any powerful attraction. It tends also to engross the mind with frivolous pursuits, and to withdraw

the attention from those objects which are really interesting and important. The consideration which fortune ensures, frees its possessor, in a great measure, from that restraint of public opinion, which is so necessary for the bulk of mankind. It naturally induces pride; which, on the least contradiction, is exasperated into fierceness. Wealth tends to obliterate the distinctions of merit and worth; to make men be esteemed by themselves and others, less according to their intrinsic desert, than to the adventitious circumstances by which they are surrounded. Nor is its influence less fatal on those, who, though destitute of fortune themselves, are placed in its immediate vicinity. They are tempted by the view of those indulgences of which they see others in possession. Dazzled by the splendour which surrounds wealth, by the accommodations which it procures, and by the homage which is paid to it, they are seized with the *amor sceleratus habendi*; they learn to consider every other object as secondary, and to scruple at no means of amassing it, however mean and criminal.

Among the early moralists, who viewed this principle in its first operation, before the arrival

of that refinement which it gradually introduces, the detestation of wealth is completely unanimous. By the ancient teachers of wisdom, contempt of fortune was always the first lesson inculcated. The conversation of Solon sufficiently shews how little value he set upon it; though he did not, like Lycurgus, proceed to the desperate extremity of entirely rooting it out; doubtless, the chief circumstance which gave such an extraordinary permanency to the institutions of that severe legislator.

Never perhaps was there so sudden a transition from poverty to the most extreme opulence, as in Rome, after the fall of Carthage, and when the reduction of Greece had laid open the wealthy provinces of Asia to proconsular rapacity. Her senators, formerly so poor and hardy, became suddenly possessed of imperial fortunes, the spoils of the conquered world. The abundance of this wealth, and the profusion with which it was lavished, seem to surpass every conception which we can form. Mountains were levelled, seas were enclosed, at the expence of private individuals. Sallust makes Catiline describe them as oppressed by the weight of

their fortunes, and labouring by every means, but in vain, to get rid of them. Here, therefore, we may form some estimate of the effects arising from wealth newly introduced. Now we find all the great writers of the age labouring for words to express their utter detestation of it. *Auri sacra fames; amor sceleratus habendi: Opes irritamenta malorum;* these are only a few of many similar expressions; and the feeling and eloquent manner in which they always touch upon this subject, proves how deeply they were penetrated by it. These sentiments, indeed, seem to be fully justified by that unparalleled profligacy to which it gave rise. The conspiracy of Catiline seems to have consisted wholly of men, who had either made an ill use of their own wealth, or were inflamed by seeing it in the possession of others.

Such are the first effects of wealth; but very different are those which it produces, after having subsisted for a certain length of time. It then becomes one of the great sources of civilization and refinement. All the highly civilized nations have been opulent. This refinement gradually inspires a disgust at those vices to

which wealth had originally prompted; while the politeness and humanity, which are in the same manner introduced, soften down those harsh inequalities to which it had given rise.

Those gross indulgences to which the votary of wealth had at first addicted himself, soon pall upon the senses. A wish then arises to seek for more refined sources of enjoyment, which if any one can invent, wealth supplies the means of amply rewarding him. Hence an impulse is given to the cultivation of poetry and the arts. For some time, indeed, these pursuits may not seem much to diminish the empire of sensuality. They are then employed chiefly in throwing a veil over its grossness, and relieving the satiety which it had before inspired. By a repetition, however, of the same process, the pleasures of a refined society are more and more disengaged from this alloy; greater value is placed on those higher and purer gratifications, in which mind holds the chief place, and which can be indulged in, with innocence and dignity. In consequence too of the close connection between the different faculties, the cultivation of those subservient to pleasure naturally

leads to that of others of a higher description. Poetry, wherever there is no check on the natural progress of society, is, if not the attendant, at least the precursor, of philosophy. The moral sense, too, which is intimately connected with the refinement of taste, and the improvement of reason, fails not to share in the general progress. Thus wealth becomes ultimately the means of raising human nature to a state of higher dignity, than that which it was originally the means of defacing.

We come now to consider wealth in its influence upon literature.

In comparing Athens and Lacedemon, the most obvious distinction consists in the superior wealth of the former. Favoured by its situation and government, Athens carried on an extensive commerce; more so, perhaps, than any other city of Greece. The successful issue of the Persian war, and the plunder of the wealthy shores of Asia Minor, were the means of procuring large fortunes to different individuals. And as the political importance of an Athenian citizen depended wholly on popular favour, he was disposed to spend liberally whatever he ob-

tained. Cimon, we are told, was accustomed every evening to ask to supper, all those whom he found uninvited in the forum. Wherever he went, servants attended, carrying money to distribute to the necessitous. His extensive estates and gardens were left unguarded, that no one might be prevented from taking what he chose. But besides this private wealth, peculiar circumstances had produced an uncommon degree of public opulence and expenditure. At the time of the Persian invasion, the different members of the Grecian confederacy formed a common treasury, which, in consideration of the approved justice of Aristides, was placed at Athens under his management. After the danger was over, Athens still insisted upon the contribution being continued; and with this extraordinary requisition, the other states, in consequence of the superiority of her arms, found themselves under the necessity of complying. There remained, however, no longer any occasion for applying it to its original purpose; and the immense sums, contributed by the states of Greece for their defence against the common enemy, were spent by Pericles in diverting the Athenian people.

The proceeding was most iniquitous; yet it cannot be denied, that to it Athens was indebted for much of her glory and genius. Public expenditure, having less in view immediate gratification than the splendour and glory of the state, gives, of all others, the most powerful impulse to the arts. Dramatic entertainments, the master-pieces of painting and sculpture, were the objects on which Athenian opulence was lavished.

We have already noticed the immense wealth with which Rome was inundated towards the end of the commonwealth. Amid the rage, which that wealth created, for pleasure and magnificence of every kind, the poet, and even the philosopher, were occasionally called in to vary the scene. Lucullus, so noted for boundless luxury, was equally celebrated for his immense libraries, and extensive literary patronage.

Italy, at the period of the revival of learning, was, beyond all comparison, the wealthiest country in Europe. She carried on almost the whole trade of that quarter of the world; to which she added the commerce of India. Nor did the

same rigid economy prevail, which is usual in commercial states. In the infancy of commerce profits are always high; and it is commonly observed, that money which is easily gained, is parted with as easily. The immense fortunes acquired by the house of Medici, were spent with princely magnificence. The profusion of Leo X. is well known. Italy contained a number of other courts, which, without being commercial, were opulent and splendid, and vied with each other in promoting the arts.

Since the more general diffusion of commercial enterprize, France, in point of wealth, has maintained a decided pre-eminence over the other continental kingdoms. Her nobility, too, fond of pleasure, and ambitious of court favour, crowded to the metropolis; where, accordingly, more money perhaps was spent, than in any other city of its size in the world.

In Britain, landed proprietors are much more attached to a country life; but, besides the allurement of pleasure, a great proportion are called to London by their parliamentary duties. The commerce of Britain, too, is a much more ample source of wealth than any of which

France could boast; and the circumstance of the grand emporium of this commerce being also the residence of the court, produces, in the capital, an extraordinary concentration of national wealth.

Great Public Events.

It appears from the slightest survey of history, that there are certain nations, and certain periods of their duration, which are peculiarly favourable to the production of great events. The occurrence of these is probably less, than is commonly imagined, dependant on individual character, and more on general laws, arising out of the condition and relations of different societies. But I have here to observe, the high scope which such events afford to ambition, the combined love of power and of glory, which forms one of the great ruling passions in the human breast. Nor is there any passion which, when

once roused, takes such complete possession of the soul, prompts to such violent and desperate deeds, or obliterates so completely every sentiment of honour or humanity.

Civil contests have been always found to effect a most unfavourable change on national character. They break down the barrier which confined every individual within a private circle, and open to him vague and unlimited prospects of advancement. They hold out to numbers the hope of rising to distinction, provided they are little scrupulous about the means; and tempt them, in the pursuit, to trample upon every distinction of right and wrong. Sovereign power, above all, the highest prize of ambition, is too often thought to absolve *him* from every restraint, who hopes to mount that envied eminence. A relentless inhumanity, a licentiousness which spurns all controul, a dissolution, in fine, of all the ties of nature and society; such is the spectacle usually exhibited among a nation torn by intestine dissentions.

External great events, of which war is the chief, do not indeed strike so directly at the vitals of the society. The sovereign, who medi-

tates great schemes of ambition, will even be disposed to conciliate the favour of his own subjects, though he will seldom be found to consult their true interests. But if he sin not against his country, he sins against mankind. A disregard of the law of nations, of the obligations of justice, and of the life of man, has invariably characterized the uncivilized conqueror; and desolation has ever followed in his train. The wars of rude nations, even of those who are mildest in their domestic intercourse, are always marked by deliberate treachery, and merciless inhumanity.

Generally speaking, the centre of political intrigue, the grand conflict of jarring interests, is at court. And it seems universally agreed, that the character which such a situation tends to form, is, in a peculiar degree, selfish, dissolute, and unprincipled. This may no doubt be, in some degree, owing to the numbers and wealth which are always collected there; but the operation of these causes is doubtless much heightened, by the circumstance of this being also the grand theatre of intrigue and ambition,

But while periods of great political vicissitude are thus fruitful in crimes, they are, at the same time, the source of the most exalted heroism and virtue. They give scope to all the great powers of the human mind; they raise it to the highest pitch of good, as well as of evil. In these periods have appeared the saviours and the benefactors of mankind, the names which stand first in the rolls of fame. Amid general tranquillity, the human character stagnates, as it were; it creeps on, in a silent and uniform tenor; there is nothing to raise it beyond itself, or to afford lessons to future times. The active spirit which is kindled by public commotions, continues after they have ceased; diffuses itself through every department of life, and becomes a source of general improvement.

Familiarity with great events has a peculiar influence in animating and ennobling the efforts of genius. Literary excellence is not the mere offspring of recluse leisure; it requires also great and interesting objects, to exercise the understanding, and warm the fancy. Dr Ferguson was, I think, the first who observed this connec-

tion of literature with the business of life; and it is confirmed by the whole tenor of history.

It must be premised, however, that external great events have this animating influence only when they are of a prosperous nature. Adversity, tending to depress the spirit of a nation, produces quite opposte effects. Accordingly we shall find, that, in every age, the nations most famed for genius, were also those who held the first rank in the political world.

Of this observation Greece furnishes a remarkable instance. Her splendid victories, with the just and glorious cause in which she fought, raised her to a height of military renown, before unparalleled in the annals of nations. Athens, which already, in a superior degree, united all the other principles of activity and progression, by a rare felicity of situation, attained this also. Her coast lay nearest to that of the Lesser Asia; and being situated without the Peloponnesus, her territory lay first exposed to the approaches of a land army. Towards her, therefore, in both instances, the overwhelming torrent first rolled. Her arms drove back the myriads of Asia, delivered Greece from bondage, and made

the great king tremble on his throne. From that era, her genius began to take its loftiest flights; and a race of writers succeeded, such as the world has rarely seen. After her power declined, and she ceased to be the arbitress of Greece, every other circumstance continued as favourable as before. Her tranquillity was maintained, and her name respected, by a succession of civilized conquerors. Her schools remained open, and were filled with a constant crowd of rhetoricians and sophists. But no Xenophon, no Socrates, ever appeared. The animating soul was fled; and genius, with liberty and greatness, had taken its flight to another region.

Of Rome, we need only observe, that her classic, or Augustan age, was also that in which she had reached the zenith of her greatness;—when she reigned the undisputed mistress of the world. The period which Gibbon has fixed upon as the commencement of her decline, is also that, in which she ceased to produce writers worthy of commanding the attention of posterity.

At the moment, too, when her arms were triumphant over every foreign enemy, she was

torn by the most violent intestine dissentions. Corrupted by overgrown wealth and dominion, she became no longer capable of liberty; and the question arose, Who was to be her master? The vast prizes opened to ambition, the struggles of expiring liberty, and the efforts of mighty chiefs contending for the empire of the world, presented a scene the most magnificent that had yet appeared on the theatre of history. Every political spring, both within and without, was brought into a state of the highest activity.

Italy, at the period of the revival of learning, contained many flourishing and powerful states. It was the scene on which were acted the greatest events of the age; the centre, as it were, around which the political system of Europe revolved. Since sinking into political insignificance, this country has ceased also to make any distinguished figure in the world of letters.

In Europe, since the revival of learning, Great Britain and France have evidently held the first rank in the political world. The age of Louis XIV. was equally distinguished for success in arms, and in literary pursuits. And, besides external great events, both these nations

have had civil commotions of long duration. In England, the troubles which terminated at the Restoration, were succeeded, not very long after, by the Revolution; which, though short, gave a powerful additional impulse to the public mind. France, besides her great civil war, had three successive minorities, the two last of which were accompanied by violent internal disturbances.

We may observe, however, that this successful cultivation of the arts takes place rather after the immediate cessation of these events, than during their actual occurrence. At that time, political distinction, more flattering, and attended with more immediate advantages, attracts within its vortex the most splendid talents; and literature is considered as only a secondary object. But when the storm is succeeded by a calm; when the avenues to political greatness are shut; then the talents which had been produced by the preceding commotions, being excluded from their usual sphere of action, turn themselves into another, less dazzling indeed, but safer, and in which they have no obstacle to encounter.

The classic age of Athens was not contempo-

rary with, but immediately succeeded the Persian war. The title alone of the Augustan age sufficiently denotes it to be that, which immediately followed the cessation of foreign and domestic commotions.

This observation is less obvious when applied to the foreign concerns of great and extensive empires, where, while the frontiers are the theatre of war, the centre may enjoy a state of repose. But it applies in a peculiar degree to civil wars, during the continuance of which, letters, as well as laws, are generally silent. As soon as they cease, however, a rich harvest of talents generally rises. Thus in England, the age of Charles II., which immediately succeeded the close of the civil wars, became, without any patronage on the part of the monarch, a sort of Augustan age. Paradise Lost, in particular, would perhaps never have been written, had not its author been excluded, by the Restoration, from any concern in public affairs. Another constellation of great writers arose immediately after the Revolution. The disturbances during the minority of Louis XIV., joined to those greater ones which had recently ceased, were,

it is doubtless, equally instrumental in producing the multitude of ingenious writers, who gave celebrity to the reign of that monarch.

The occurrence of great public events, besides prompting to the cultivation of literature, is peculiarly efficacious in giving a proper direction to its efforts. To their absence I am disposed to attribute that corruption of learning, which has been supposed to be the natural consequence of its continuing to be cultivated beyond a certain period. Literature, it will be found, is thus corrupted, when its votaries are ignorant of, or inattentive to, the objects of real life; when the philosopher employs his mind on questions that are of no importance to the happiness of mankind; when the poet ceases to occupy himself with human interests, and human passions; and when both seek only to gratify vanity, by the display of misplaced ingenuity. To this wrong bias the writer will always be liable, when there is passing on the scene of life, nothing great or varied, to turn his views in that direction. Whenever a man seeks to shine by writing on a subject in which he takes no interest, his taste is inevitably corrupted.

An exemplification of this remark seems to have been afforded by Alexandria, after the period of its subjection to the Roman empire. Even then, from its situation, its commerce, the number of its inhabitants, and the splendid patronage of literature in the time of the Ptolemies, it continued, even after its subjection to Rome, to flourish long as a seat of learning. But there is, perhaps, no situation less productive of interesting events, than the remote provincial town of a despotic empire. In the capital, the residence of the monarch, and the scene perhaps of frequent revolutions, a considerable degree of bustle is always kept up. But here there were no objects of real importance to occupy the thinking mind; it was left to feed entirely on its own reveries; and Alexandria became the centre of all kind of dreaming and useless speculation. Hence though her writers be numerous, few or none have risen to the rank of classics. Longinus, so far as I recollect, is almost the only exception; who, though sprung from the Alexandrian school, yet being raised by his subsequent fortunes to a familiarity with great events, and illustrious characters, shook off the pedantry of his origin, and has

displayed, in his interesting writings, all the correctness and purity of a happier age.

Precisely the same perversion took place in the infant state of the literature of modern Europe; when it could not have arisen from any natural effect of continued cultivation. But it seems sufficiently accounted for by the observations just made. Learning, during the middle ages, was entirely in the hands of monks; they alone possessed the leisure and tranquillity requisite for its cultivation. But these were men secluded, by their very profession, from the living scene; for whom it was a religious duty, to shut their eyes on every thing relating to the business of this world. Even had they been otherwise disposed, their narrow and confined mode of life would have left them little opportunity of indulging their inclination. Ignorant both of nature and of man, they could form no just conceptions, even on those important subjects to which they had devoted themselves. Nothing remained but a few barren and uninteresting ideas to ring continual changes upon, and to torture into a thousand different shapes, without the least profit either to themselves or others.

The cloud was never dispersed, till the diffusion of wealth and intercourse made letters be generally cultivated by men of the world. This character belongs in a peculiar degree to Bacon, the great philosophical reformer, and the first to expose the futility of monkish studies. Even then it dispersed only by degrees; and the literature of modern Europe continued, during several ages, to smell of the cloister.

I have the satisfaction to observe, that in consequence of the wide diffusion of literature through all classes of society, it is now exempted, in a great measure, from these political vicissitudes. Having struck its roots deeper, it no longer requires the same fostering care, nor the same combination of favourable circumstances, to make it flourish. The great number of persons, of all ranks, by whom it is cultivated, place its patronage on a surer and more permanent basis. From the same causes, its direction is likely to be more sound and useful. Having for its object, the gratification, not of a few recluse individuals, but of mankind in general, it must recommend itself by being natural, and adapted to general use.

CHAP. IV.

THE REPRESSING PRINCIPLES.

We have all along had occasion to observe the marked difference, in point of time, between the corrupting and improving tendencies. The former is almost the immediate result of those different circumstances which constitute the progress of society; it "grows with their growth, and strengthens with their strength." But the process of improvement is of a much slower nature. At first almost insensible, it advances only by gradual steps; nor is it till after a long succession of ages, that it begins to acquire any degree of ascendancy. The former process must, therefore, be in full force for a long time before the latter can acquire power sufficient to check it. During this period, had no remedy been

applied, the world must have become a complete theatre of crimes and disorders. The probability, indeed, is, that these would have sprung up so copiously, as completely to choke the tender plants of improvement, which were silently taking root. Nature, however, has not been inattentive on this occasion. She has provided powerful remedies, which, acting directly counter to the progressive principles, prevent them, in their corrupting state, from rising to any alarming height; leaving them, however, such a degree of activity, as may be sufficient for carrying on all the processes connected with the general improvement. Sometimes, indeed, by altering their course, and confining it within a narrower channel, they enable it to operate with more decisive and lasting effect. Here they seem to resemble the process of weeding in agriculture, which checks the powers of vegetation only to prevent them from wasting themselves in useless luxuriance.

These principles, in their effects, are completely the reverse of those which we have treated above. Their tendency is beneficial in the first instance; but, considered in itself, and ab-

stracting from that necessity which calls them forth, it is ultimately deleterious. They check both the good and bad effects resulting from the progress of society; they are designed as a remedy, or rather as a palliative, for its too rapid operation. They subdue the violence of passion; nspire moderation and mildness; and preserve society in a peaceful and uniform condition. But they are hostile to all the great efforts of the human mind; they check the career of improvement; they are unfriendly to genius and the arts. Although, therefore, their operation be indispensable for maintaining the order of society, yet it is desirable that they should not be applied in any greater degree, than is necessary for attaining that object.

The Repressing Principles may, I think, be comprehended under these two:

I. The Necessity of Labour.

II. Coercion.

I. *The Necessity of Labour.*

The nature of the thing, and the universal observation of mankind, agree alike in the powerful influence of labour as a preservative of innocence. The doom of incessant toil, which was pronounced upon man when he first fell from his primitive simplicity, operates, not as a punishment only, but also as a remedy. The time and efforts employed in labour, must evidently be so much withdrawn from the strength of the passions. They tend to produce a sedate and sober character of mind. The intervals of leisure in the life of a laborious man, will be satisfied, either with rest, or with a few cheap and simple amusements. It will be easy for him to keep within those bounds which nature and temperance prescribe; nor will there be room for that restlessness, that craving after new and more poignant enjoyments, which naturally arises in the unemployed mind.

By all moralists, in every age, idleness has been branded as the sure forerunner of vice. In the case of young men, whose characters are forming, we daily observe, how dangerous it is that they should have too much time on their hands. It is among the unemployed classes of every society, that licentious habits are chiefly found to prevail.

But while labour thus operates as an antidote to vice, it is no less powerful as a check to improvement. It is hostile to all flights of genius, and high refinement of character. It weighs down the springs of the mind; it damps that ardour which prompts at once to heroic actions, and to the cultivation of the arts. With regard to this latter object, leisure is indispensable. The man who is occupied with unceasing solicitude about the means of subsistence, remains contented within that limited circle prescribed to him by his wants and necessities. Leisure alone gives birth to that curiosity which prompts to new discoveries and profound researches; and alone supplies the means of prosecuting them with success.

In the absence of employment, a man natural-

ly occupies himself in the pursuit of pleasure. In following this tract, he soon encounters that satiety which haunts all human enjoyments, and to which those of the senses are peculiarly liable. To escape from this evil, he has recourse, first to those arts that delight the eye and the imagination; which, by a natural process, lead to the cultivation of higher faculties. These faculties indeed he will often be led to cultivate, merely because he has nothing else to do, and wishes to be relieved from the oppressive burden of idleness.

In every age where the sciences have been prosecuted with success, we shall find that there has been a numerous class of men who have enjoyed a complete exemption from the necessity of labour.

In the free states of Greece and Rome, the performance of any kind of handicraft was supposed to be beneath the dignity of a free citizen. It was devolved altogether upon the slaves, who formed, in those states, a majority of the population. At Thebes, as we are informed by Aristotle, no man could be admitted to the privileges

of a free citizen, who had not abstained, for the space of ten years, from every manual occupation. The interesting objects presented by liberty, and by great political occurrences, might indeed attract a large proportion into public life; but of the many who enjoyed the most ample leisure, as all were able, so some were disposed to devote it to science and the nobler arts.

In modern Europe, the distribution of landed property, and the practice of primogeniture, have formed a very numerous body of men, exempt from the necessity of following any occupation, and whose habits and ideas lead them to consider it as disgraceful. Continually employed in searching out and exhausting every form of enjoyment, they may no doubt have been instrumental in spreading dissolute and licentious habits. It is to them, however, that literature is indebted for its most steady patronage; and to them we may in a great degree ascribe that refinement, both of manners and character, which has prevailed in modern Europe.

II. *Coercion.*

We have now had a view of the effects which are produced on the character and condition of man, by the labour to which he is subjected. The subject of the present chapter, however, holds a still more distinguished part in the history of the species. To it I would refer every thing which tends to inspire the sentiments of fear or awe. It includes therefore all those forms of government and subordination, which form such prominent features in the aspect of civilized life.

This principle is not unfolded, nor indeed is it necessary, in the very first rudiments of society. We shall hereafter have occasion to notice a few small communities which live in perfect harmony, without any government whatever. This state of things, however, cannot last long. As numbers and wealth increase, the necessity of

some check upon their operation speedily becomes evident.

That provision ought to be made for the protection of person and property, and for the prevention of those crimes which disturb the order of society, is universally acknowledged. But we might at first sight suppose nothing more to be necessary, than merely that such laws should be established, and enforced by common consent. There might seem to be no occasion for any humiliating inequality between citizens of the same state; nor for any material restraint on the natural liberty of man. The lessons of experience, however, are widely different. For corrupted, and yet unimproved man, a far more powerful restraint is necessary, to check those propensities to disorder and violence, which are rapidly unfolded by the augmentation of numbers and wealth. When we have occassion hereafter to observe the extreme profligacy which is produced, even by a very small degree of the progressive principles operating unchecked, we shall see the absolute necessity which must afterwards exist, of imposing upon them powerful and multiplied forms of restraint. Laws, among

a rude people, would have little influence, unless there were something external and visible to awe them into submission. There must be something to inspire sentiments of fear and reverence; something to check in every individual the hope of personal aggrandizement, and to confine his existence within a private and domestic sphere. Violence must be prevented, not merely by the dread of punishment, but by subduing those inclinations which prompt to it; by substituting a sedate and quiet character in the room of those irregular and tumultuous propensities, which naturally spring up in uncivilized man.

These blessings of regular government, like the common benefits of nature, are often enjoyed without a due estimate of their value. Awful proofs of it, however, are sometimes afforded, when, by some great convulsion, the provision which nature had made for this purpose is for a moment suspended. It is strikingly proved by that extreme profligacy of manners, which is found to take place in cities ravaged by pestilence. Amid universal desolation, the hand of justice is paralysed: and it appears, that not even the hor-

rors of impending death, and of the scene of surrounding calamity, can compensate for the absence of those restraints which law and government imposed. Nor have there been wanting events even more recent and terrible, to impress this truth with still greater force on the nations of Europe.

The first question which occurs with regard to this coercion, is, in what hands it ought to be lodged. Now it is vain to hope, that in the stage of society to which we allude, it should be imposed by the mass of the nation upon itself. Men, fierce, ignorant, and impatient of any species of restraint, could never spontaneously determine to subject themselves to it, or at least could not adhere steadily to that determination. The very habit of assemblage which is necessary for exercising this function, brings into action one of the most powerful sources of confusion and turbulence. It then becomes necessary, that the power should be exercised by a small part of the society over the rest; hence that dominion of the few over the many, so necessary to the existence of a numerous society. Yet even this is not always sufficient. These few, while they

impose restraint upon others, must be free from it themselves. Their interests, their views, must often be opposite and jarring; each will seek to gain over adherents; and thus he, who has offended one, will often be sure of protection from another. His danger will not be imminent and inevitable. Aristocracy, therefore, among uncivilized nations, proves generally one of the most turbulent of all forms of government. A remedy must then be sought in the dominion of one. His power, being centered in a single point, and thwarted by no obstacles, will be much more rapid and resistless, than that which is shared among a multitude of individuals.

Coercion may be either arbitrary or legal. Concerning the intrinsic superiority of the latter, there cannot exist a doubt. But, during those ruder periods which now occupy our attention, it is scarcely possible that laws can be established, or duly enforced. Their very formation is the result of time and experience; and their observance requires habits of thinking and acting systematically, which are then unknown. Arbitrary coercion must therefore be employed; and, indeed, it seems in itself to be the best fitted of

the two for keeping rude natures in subjection. Its nature, vague and unlimited, and the speed with which it may be brought into action, gives it a degree of energy, which cannot be possessed by a power that is retarded and fettered by the restraint of laws and of legal forms.

It follows, from what has now been observed, that the arbitrary dominion of a single person, is the most powerful form in which coercion can be applied. To it, therefore, when national corruption rises to its utmost height, it becomes necessary to resort. The promptitude with which it acts, the impossibility of escape, and the rapidity with which it may fall upon every head, diffuse throughout the society a general sentiment of fear, which humbles every aspiring thought, and awes the most turbulent spirits into silence. Hence, in ancient Rome, even when disorders had risen to the most alarming height, they were uniformly and immediately quelled by the appointment of a Dictator. Hence that profound tranquillity, which, in the east, an energetic despotism diffuses over immense empires, teeming with every source of turbulence and corruption. And, however afflicting and humiliating such a

condition must appear to those who are placed in happier circumstances; yet there seem to be states of society, and those not few, when every engine for repressing the fierce and restless spirits of men must be brought into action.

That this coercion should be virtuous and enlightened, is no doubt desirable; but it is not essential. Restraint and subjection of any kind is better than none. At the same time we may observe, that power is generally exercised in a manner favourable to the moral interests of those who are subjected to it. Most men, whatever vices they may themselves choose to indulge, are anxious that those placed under them should conduct themselves well. No passion here operates to blind the judgment, or pervert the will. In the case of a father towards his children, we see this daily exemplified; and though the connection be less intimate between the governors and the governed, yet there too the rule holds to a great extent. The laws enacted either by the sovereign, or the body of the people, are alike directed against crimes. Even setting the question of interest aside, this seems to be an uniform result of the sense of moral obliga-

tion; and though a bad prince may wish to have a few companions and flatterers of his vices, it must be desirable, even for him, that the great mass of his subjects should be decent and orderly. He is controuled also by public opinion, and by a regard to reputation. In a society, therefore, where men have not yet learned to place any restraint upon themselves, the prevalence of a considerable degree of subordination will tend to raise the standard of moral conduct higher than it would otherwise have been.

The observations, hitherto made, have applied chiefly to government, the most prominent and universal of all forms of coercion. There are others, however, possessed of considerable influence, and which it would be improper to pass over in silence.

Fear from external enemies is an important form of coercion. It draws closer the union between the different members of a state; and it renders a smaller degree of internal coercion sufficient. The free states, whose constitution has been most stable and flourishing, are those exposed to strong hostility from without. The

democracy of Athens, on being relieved from the apprehension of the Persian arms, was found to become quite tumultuous and ungovernable. In Rome, after the expulsion of Tarquin, the utmost cordiality at first prevailed; nor, so long as that monarch lived, did the aristocracy assume any oppressive ascendant. Her subsequent history was marked by violent dissensions between the senate and people; yet not a drop of civil blood was shed, till after the fall of Carthage.

But besides these external and obvious modes, there are others of a more delicate nature, which early begin to display themselves. Among these, one of the most powerful and salutary is Religion, such as it prevails in rude ages. Though unenlightened, and in many respects erroneous, both in doctrine and precept, it forms, even then, one of the most effectual means of establishing subordination, and imposing a restraint on the passions of men.

The love of a good name is another principle of the same kind. It appears under two forms; the desire of praise, and the dread of censure. The former is rather of a stimulating nature, im-

pelling men to splendid and public exertions. But the latter is decidedly coercive. The dread of losing their good name, is one of the most effectual means by which the bulk of mankind are restrained within the limits of order and decency; and with this, the singular delight which persons of uncultivated minds take in speaking unfavourably of each other, happily enough coincides.

Coercion is peculiarly subservient to the preservation of public peace, by the expedition with which it may be brought into action. It is, if I may so express myself, the most moveable part in the great machine of society; the part which can be most expeditiously employed in correcting and adjusting the rest. In periods of tumult, the necessity of labour receives no peculiar augmentation; nay, the restlessness and turbulence which accompany such periods, tend rather to draw men off from an attention to their private concerns. But when a ferment arises in the public mind, and disorders ensue, which threaten to be subversive of public tranquillity, a stronger degree of authority may, without delay, be applied for its restoration. In the best constituted

free states, (always more or less exposed to these tempests,) provision is made for such an occasional and temporary extension of the power of government. Such, in Rome, was the appointment of a dictator, and, in Britain, the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* act. These states thus at once remedy the present evil, and obviate the necessity of employing permanent restraints, for the counteraction of temporary disorders. Again, when the citizens of a state are suddenly multiplied, by conquest or otherwise; when an unexpected torrent of wealth flows in; this principle may be brought forward without delay, to obviate the pernicious effects arising immediately out of these changes.

That liberty, when in the hands of those who have not yet learned to make a proper use of it, exerts on the character an influence positively pernicious, is a truth confirmed by constant experience. We are daily accustomed to observe how much children are injured by indulgence, and improved by being kept under a proper degree of discipline; and men in a rude state greatly resemble children. In the case also of young and unformed characters, we are accustomed to

remark how dangerous it is that they should be left too much to their own guidance, and removed from under the eye of those of whom they stand in awe. We find navigators and travellers, who had dealings with turbulent and refractory tribes, generally complaining, that mild treatment served only to exasperate their bad dispositions, and that strictness and severity formed the only successful mode of treatment.

It must be recollected, however, that this beneficial effect of servitude is merely temporary; that it serves only for the suppression of present disorder. It opposes all those ultimate benefits which result from the active exertions of the human mind; nay, if severe and uninterrupted, it would intercept them entirely. Liberty is necessary for giving effect to the progressive principles, and for leaving them room to operate; it is essential therefore to every improvement which they tend to produce. It enables man to act, to unfold all his powers, to become all of which he is capable. Where the operations of his mind are cramped, and all its springs weighed down by the load of arbitrary power, no great or brilliant effort can be expected. The progress

of corruption may be stopped; but all activity, and all improvement, must stop along with it.

It is liberty alone which can form that stable self-determining virtue, which is alone suitable to the dignity of human nature. Little value can be attached to the good conduct of him, who does not commit evil, merely because he dare not; or who abstains from violence, because his spirits are bowed down beneath the weight of servitude. When these restraints are withdrawn, he will probably be the first to rush into every excess, and to compensate for former privations by unlimited indulgence. It is only by the habit of determining for himself, of weighing the consequences of his own actions, that he can learn to direct his conduct by sure and manly principles.

As liberty is essential to genuine virtue, so she has always been found the great nurse of the arts. Genius has taken its highest flights only when buoyed up by her influence. The classic ages, which the fame of their writers has rendered immortal, have, almost all, been ages of unbounded freedom. Even amid the cala-

mities of licentiousness and misrule, science has reared its head.

Athens was completely a popular government. The seeds of aristocracy, which had been introduced by Solon, were prevented from rising by the immoderate powers granted to the assembly of the people, by which it was soon enabled to engross the whole administration. In Athens, therefore, the most ample scope was given to talents of every kind. Eloquence, the grand road to power, was cultivated beyond every other art; and its teachers, who were also philosophers and learned men, experienced a respect elsewhere unexampled. In no city, perhaps, was the path to eminence so little obstructed by the claims of birth, or by any other adventitious circumstance; merit, or at least the favour of the people, formed the only road to distinction.

Rome, in the general course of her history, certainly exhibits a character much more aristocratical. But, at the period when her literature began to flourish, the power of the senate was reduced to a low ebb; the distinction of patrician and plebeian, which had been so rigid-

ly adhered to, was in a great measure effaced; and a democracy, or rather anarchy, had succeeded, most calamitous in itself, but which laid the field of public honours open to all who chose to enter the lists. Eloquence, for some time, became as powerful, and was prosecuted with as much ardour, as it had been at Athens; the literary and philosophical characters were held in equal, or even greater esteem.

In the courts of the Mahomedan conquerors, every other circumstance is found united; wealth, power, and widely extended communication. But liberty was wanting; and this was a want which nothing could repair. Philosophers, affected by the general tameness, contented themselves with bowing to Grecian authority; and amid the learned men who crowded the courts of Haroun and of Mahmud, Sadi the poet alone laid the foundation of a lasting reputation.

Of the states of modern Italy, many were free. Florence, the most famed of all for learning, was entirely a popular government.

Of the British constitution, it is needless to say any thing. France, however, presents an exception. She certainly has had a classic age,

in which freedom had no share. Various circumstances concurred to compensate for its absence. She was subjected to a form of absolute government, so mild as hardly to deserve the name. A standard of taste was formed by the residence, in Paris, of a numerous, opulent, and highly privileged aristocracy, from whom, as is well known, literature experienced the most liberal patronage. This aristocracy consisted not of the nobles merely, but of the clergy and parliament, both powerful bodies; and the three united, equalled in number perhaps the whole citizens of Athens. The civil wars, accompanied with popular commotions, which occurred during successive minorities, produced an effect nearly analogous to liberty, in calling forth the talents of individuals. In short, the general diffusion of literature, by means of the press, had already begun to render it less dependant on political vicissitudes. Yet poetry, and criticism tinged with pedantry, were, under Louis XIV., the branches most successfully cultivated. Philosophy appeared, indeed, in the following age; but the enmity which from the first reigned between it and the ruling powers, both in church and state, seems

clearly to indicate, that the two were ill calculated for subsisting together.

A free government is peculiarly favourable to the cultivation of moral and political philosophy, certainly of all branches the most important. These can seldom be carried on with safety under the jealous eye of a despot. In free states, too, the activity of the human mind, and the various aspects under which it presents itself, furnish ample room for such speculations; and present a striking contrast to the stillness and uniformity of absolute government. Poetry, as ministering to pleasure, may be expected to meet with the greatest encouragement in courts. Yet, under the shade of freedom chiefly flourishes the poet of nature, the man who can paint human feelings and passions in true and glowing colours. A circumstance, still more wonderful, is that which takes place in the history of those arts which minister to the gratification of the external senses; the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Here the greatest demand must undoubtedly be produced by the residence of a court; yet it is in the pure democracies of Athens and Florence, that they have reached the summit of excellence;

while despotism can produce only huge and shapeless masses, devoid of any informing principle of genius or taste. So much more dependant are these arts upon mind, than upon external excitements.

The only sciences which flourish under despotism, are the physical and mathematical; these, when other circumstances are favourable, seem even to have some predilection for this form of government.

An observation occurs here, similar, and arising from the same causes, with that which we had occasion to make under the head of Public Events. Genius, though deriving its source from liberty, yet appears less conspicuous during its actual existence, than after its immediate cessation. In free states, the career of public employment, being open to all, will generally attract the most brilliant talents; while literature, as a leading object, will be cultivated by those only whom a love of tranquillity, or disappointed ambition, have inspired with an aversion for public life. But when the established authority of a single person has put an end to these private pretensions; then the great powers and strong passions, which had been generated by

free and active competition, are all forced into this direction, where alone they can find employment and gratification.

A very slight survey of history will clearly prove, that the mild government of a single person, immediately succeeding a republican form, is, of all political situations, the most favourable to literature. I say, the mild government; for the transition must not be too violent; nor can any thing flourish well under too stern and iron a despotism. The administration, we may almost say the reign, of Pericles, was undoubtedly the period in the history of Athens most auspicious to letters. It is adorned, among many others, by the names of Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Xenophon, Plato, Thucydides. In like manner, the classic age of Rome scarcely began till after the establishment of absolute sway in the person of Augustus, from whom it has received the name of the Augustan age. Even to the short interval of Cæsar's dictatorship, we are indebted for most of Cicero's philosophical works; composed during that unwelcome leisure, which was afforded him by the downfal of Roman liberty.

In Florence, a classic age was produced under the mild sway of the Medici, and in England, the reign of Charles II. presented an æra precisely similar. Since that time, nearly the same effect has been produced by its mixed government, which, while it gives ample scope to talent, places, at the same time, many obstacles in the way of its rising to political distinction.

Although absolute government be eminently unfavourable to the production of talent, yet the patronage it holds out, is, in some respects, more flattering than any which can be offered under a republican form. The great concentration of wealth in one point, produces a degree of splendour and brilliancy elsewhere unknown; hence the courts of kings have generally proved a centre of attraction, even for the gravest philosophers. When, therefore, these two forms happen to co-exist in the same age, and in the vicinity of each other, we find them concurring in the production of works of genius; the free state producing the talents, and the monarchical patronizing them. The court of Dionysius of Syracuse, and even that of Philip of Macedon, were crowded with Athenian

philosophers. It was from Florence that Leo X. drew those great artists, who form the ornament of his age; Rome itself yielded nothing above mediocrity.

The effects of liberty coincide with those of great public events, in another respect; in preventing the corruption of literature, and in giving a sound and practical direction to its efforts. A free state presents an active and busy scene; and as the great mass of the citizens are not only allowed, but called upon, to occupy themselves with public concerns, their attention is habitually fixed upon the events which are passing around them.

The most memorable decline of taste which we read of in history, is that which took place in Roman literature soon after the age of Augustus. The cause of this decline appears evidently to be the loss of her liberty, and the establishment of a military despotism. Talents were no longer cultivated with a reference to public life; they could no longer command distinction in the senate, or in the forum; eloquence was silent, beneath the frown of power. The active spirit, kindled by those eventful

struggles which preceded the fall of the commonwealth, continued still alive during the Augustan age; and from causes above explained, the first establishment of absolute power seemed rather auspicious to the genius of Rome. In the course of a very few reigns, however, the writings of Seneca discover this depraved taste to be rapidly gaining ground; nor was it long before Quintilian found ample materials for a chapter, *de Causis corruptæ Eloquentiæ*. Even Tacitus and Pliny, though themselves men of business and of the world, were not wholly exempt from the reigning affectation. Now at Athens, whose classic age continued for a much longer period, no such corruption took place. Her genius, indeed, declined with her greatness and power; but Menander, to judge by the fragments which have come down to us, was as completely free from conceit and affectation, as was Eschylus, who preceded him by more than two centuries. It was in Athens, that Socrates may be said to have founded the philosophy of common life; that he called men down from visionary and unprofitable specula-

tions, to objects which really and intimately concerned them.

These views seem to be confirmed by the remarkable circumstance, that the law Latin, which, from its very nature, was necessarily confined to real business, continued to maintain its purity amid the corruption of every other species of composition.

As liberty, so far as it is compatible with the order of society, is not only a means of improvement, but is, in itself, a positive good, it may be interesting to enquire into the circumstances on which the capacity for it depends. This capacity then will, I think, be found to be in the inverse ratio of the progressive principles in their corrupting state, and in the direct ratio of the same principles in their improving state. The free states which we meet with among the people of antiquity, are all poor, and of little extent; the acquisition of greatness and opulence proved uniformly fatal to their liberty. Hence Montesquieu, confining his views chiefly to states of this description, considers, not only small numbers, but the limitation of wealth to objects of physical necessity, (*physique necessaire,*) as essential to the formation of a perfect

republic. Now, as man is impelled, by his natural propensities, to remove always farther and farther from this state of privation, there must, in the earlier period of his history, be a continual descent from liberty to servitude. For a long period, accordingly, by far the most numerous portion of the race has been subjected to absolute government, more or less combined with aristocracy. At a time when the corrupting principles have arrived at a great height, while the tendency towards improvement is still faint, it is probably by such a form only, that the violence of men's passions can be checked, and national order maintained. As, however, the improving process advances, a different scene presents itself. The enlightened views, the pacific and orderly habits, which are the result of its continued operation, renders a great degree of freedom no longer incompatible with public. In Britain, we see ten millions of men in possession of a degree of liberty, which, considering the abolition of domestic slavery, may fairly be ranked above that enjoyed by the freest nations of antiquity. And there appears to me every reason to believe, that this constitution is

not, as has generally been supposed, a mere accidental and anomalous occurrence, but is only the first example of a more improved system, naturally arising out of the progress of society.

CHAP. V.

OF CERTAIN GENERAL MODIFICATIONS OF THE PROGRESSIVE PRINCIPLES.

The above analysis may have enabled the reader to form some idea of the nature and influence of those principles, on which the progress of society depends. In the course of my enquiries, however, some modifications, common to them all, have appeared to take place, which must be explained before we can form a complete idea of their mode of operation.

1. The Progressive Principles seem early to exert a corrupting influence; yet this is not their very first effect. In a certain small degree, they seem to be directly and immediately beneficial. Neither absolute solitude, nor ex-

treme and desperate want, are friendly to the human character. They tend either to render men stupid and listless, or, by depriving the faculties of their proper objects, to turn them into an eccentric and preposterous direction. A certain limited degree of social intercourse, some small portion of external accommodation, seem necessary even to produce the perfection of the primitive character; to prevent the mind from being absolutely chilled and benumbed. This extreme of privation is indeed worse than its opposite, in as much as it contains within itself no germ of improvement; nothing desirable either for the present or future. As, however, it is inimical to the strongest passions of the human mind, we have absolute security against its becoming general, or, in any case, subsisting longer than absolute necessity may require.

2. It may be interesting to enquire into the effect produced upon individual character, by the early and powerful operation of these principles. The corruption which they then induce, does not appear to be universal, or to operate equally upon every member of the society. On the contrary, the periods in which it reigns, are general-

ly distinguished for heroic actions and illustrious characters. Great and trying circumstances call forth all the latent energies of the soul, banish indifference and mediocrity, and lead to the extremes, either of good, or of evil. These therefore are the periods when human nature invests itself, at once in its most brilliant, and its darkest colours. The latter, however, always seems to predominate; and I am afraid also, that a character composed of them will be found best fitted for such periods, and likely to meet with the greatest success. In the case of popular commotions particularly, the most daring and unprincipled too often gain the pre-eminence.*

Rome, previous to the fall of the commonwealth, affords the example of a period when all the progressive principles were in an extraordinary state of activity. Another, no less striking, has been recently exhibited; when, from a great, an opulent, and a corrupted people, all the restraints of religion, laws, and government, were at once withdrawn; and a growth sprung

* *In turbas atque discordias quisque pessimus fortissimus.* —TACIT.

up, of crimes and calamities, before unparalleled in the annals of nations. In the former period, we find some of the most exalted characters which adorn the page of history; a Scipio, a Cato, and a Brutus: and though the latter can produce no names to match with these, it too was certainly distinguished by many heroic and generous actions. But still, in both, guilt is the grand and triumphant feature; and it, at length, like a torrent, carried every thing along with it.

In pursuance of these views, I would give to the progressive principles, when operating upon individual character, the name of *stimulating*; and to the repressing, that of *sedative*. The former tend to animate, the latter to chill, those passions and energies which prompt to every extreme, both of virtue and of vice.

3. It is a remarkable circumstance, that the same effect which is produced by the action of the progressive principles, is produced also by their sudden and temporary privation. Thus, continued poverty tends to lower the spirit of a nation; but the effects of an occasional famine are decidedly stimulating. Even in China, where such profound tranquillity usually reigns, this

event commonly gives rise to an insurrection. We have already noticed how much a suspension of great political events prompts to the cultivation of the arts and sciences. In general, when any thing which stimulated to activity is suddenly withdrawn, the same activity remains, and is turned into a new direction. It is frequently increased too by the change; for the objects which the mind meets with in this new tract, wearing the attraction of novelty, inspire a greater enthusiasm, than the former objects, in which that first gloss had been worn off.

CHAPTER VI.

ON CERTAIN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PROGRESSIVE AND REPRESSING PRINCIPLES.

All the progressive principles are objects of general desire. Men naturally delight to crowd together. They tire in solitude and seclusion, and seek that animation and gaiety which is produced by assembled multitudes. They delight also in *seeing the world*, (as it is called;) in contemplating a variety of objects, and meeting with men of various habits and character. Wealth is a still more universal passion; and though public commotions may not, in themselves, be objects of desire, yet that love of power which inevitably leads to them, is a principle deeply rooted in the human breast. A state of progress, therefore, is the natural state of man; and if at any time he remains stationary, it is only through the influence of fear or necessity.

The repressing principles, on the contrary, are naturally and universally held in aversion. All men hate labour and restraint, and submit to them only through the pressure of an imperious necessity. Yet nature has taken her measures so well, that these principles are found universally established, in such a degree as is requisite for securing the order of society. This is a circumstance so curious, as to deserve to be illustrated at some length; especially as it affords signal proofs of that intelligence and design, which have been employed in arranging the structure of human society.

In regard to labour, indeed, the necessity is so urgent, that its general prevalence is the less to be wondered at. Great skill, however, is displayed in adapting its degree to the extent in which the corrupting principles operate. Hunting affords subsistence only to a very few, and to these few leaves an ample portion of leisure. An hour's chace will often supply a family with provision for several days. Pasturage subsists a greater number of men, and at the same time, imposes upon them more employment; while agriculture yields more food, and requires more

labour, than either. Again, wealth, or an abundance of external accommodation, necessarily supposes extensive manufactures and commerce, the establishment of which carries the necessity of labour to its utmost height. Thus we find this principle continually growing with the growth of the corrupting principles. At the same time, that the progress of improvement may not stand still, a certain proportion is set aside of every society, to whom is granted a complete exemption from labour; and whose exertions have by experience been found sufficient for carrying on all the different processes of intellectual improvement. And I am disposed to think, that, in consequence of the extension of machinery, and the division of labour, a provision is made for gradually releasing the human race from this severe, though necessary bondage; and for allowing them a greater portion of leisure, in proportion as they become qualified to make a proper use of it. Something of this kind, indeed, seems already to have taken place, since, in this country, we do not see the lower orders so incessantly occupied, as in some of the great Eastern empires; where every thing is

performed by manual and individual labour. But upon this subject I shall not at present enlarge.

Coercion exhibits a still more singular and interesting mechanism. By all men it is held in abhorrence; yet it is only by their own voluntary act, that the bulk of mankind can be subjected to it. Accordingly we find some philosophers, who are never weary of expressing their astonishment, that multitudes should be so infatuated, as to submit their conduct to the arbitrary decisions of one, or of a few of their fellow men. From what has been said above, it may appear how little foundation there is for invectives against a system, which, in a greater or less degree, is essential to the very existence of society; yet every one must admit, that this is perhaps the most curious problem which occurs in the whole history of man. Some light may, perhaps, be thrown upon it in the subsequent parts of the present work. At present, I shall content myself with giving a slight view of the relation which coercion bears to the different principles, which it is intended to controul.

The collection of numbers together, while it augments the tendency to tumult and dissension, unavoidably leads to a discovery of the advantages resulting from union and co-operation. Combinations are in consequence formed, which necessarily suppose a certain sacrifice of private interest, and which, as will appear hereafter, of themselves impose various restraints on the violence of individual passion. As, however, their members become more numerous, the difficulty of acting in concert is increased; and a more evident necessity arises for electing chiefs, and for resigning to them some portion of their natural liberty. Thus, in proportion to the increase of numbers, and to the violence of the passions which it generates, will be the restraint, to which, with a view to the gratification of those passions, men will be inclined to submit.

Readiness of communication tends also to induce subjection. In extensive plains the government is generally absolute. Ease of access tends both to inspire ambitious projects, and to facilitate their execution. It thus extends the boundaries of states; and this extension has always been found inimical to liberty. Dr Gil-

lies justly observes, that had Greece consisted of an uniform and connected tract of country, it would probably have been all united into one monarchy; and that it was indebted for freedom, to the being broken into such a number of small divisions.

In the case of wealth, there was a peculiar necessity for some check upon that more destitute part of the community, by whom it is beheld with eager and desiring eyes. Enjoying a great superiority of numbers, and consequently of physical strength, it might otherwise be easy for them to possess themselves of this object of their wishes. Now this check seems to be contained in wealth itself, and in the impression so universally produced by those objects, which it is employed in procuring. The splendour with which the opulent man is surrounded, the pomp of dress, the multitude of his attendants, spread around him a dazzling awe, which rules supreme over the vulgar mind, and which "scarce the firm philosopher can scorn." A fence is thus formed around him, by which he is protected from those dangers to which his situation exposes him; and this influence is con-

solidated, and rendered permanent, by the distinctions of birth, and the establishment of a regular gradation of ranks.

Under the last head, I need only observe, that violent popular commotions, in any nation, are the never failing forerunners of the loss of its liberty. Despotism seems, in this case, to be speedily induced, as a severe, but indispensable remedy.

CHAP. VII.

OF KNOWLEDGE CONSIDERED IN ITS RELATION TO THE PROGRESS OF SOCIETY.

OUR language contains no word so comprehensive as to include the whole of that class of objects, which forms the subject of the present Chapter. *Knowledge*, though generally confined to an acquaintance with facts, seems the most capable of being used in this extensive sense; and I wish it to be here understood, as including every thing connected with science, literature, and the nobler arts. Upon these, almost exclusively, depends the progress of man, considered as a moral and intelligent being. The arts of external accommodations, and others connected with the senses, seem,

with tolerable accuracy, to be handed down by tradition, and successively improved. But the more abstract and evanescent character of mental productions, unfits them altogether for this mode of transmission. Without the aid of letters, therefore, man, in this higher department of his nature, must have remained altogether stationary. Hence, in investigating the progress of the human mind, and the steps by which it is to be carried on, there is no object the investigation of which can be of higher importance. It is my intention, therefore, should circumstances admit of the completion of these enquiries, to reserve a separate portion of the work for its full consideration. But it will be necessary in this place to give such a slight outline, as may exhibit the relation in which it stands to the other principles, which regulate the progress of society.

From the induction of facts which has already been made, we may form a judgment of the variety of circumstances which must concur in forming what are called classic ages;—those ages when the human mind makes its grand strides in the career of improvement, and when works

are produced, worthy to command the attention even of distant posterity. For this purpose, it appears, that there must, in a high degree, be the presence of every one of the progressive principles, and the absence of all those of an opposite nature. In Athens, Rome, Florence, and Britain, this has been distinctly traced. France indeed has, in one particular, presented an exception; but this has been shewn to be the result of peculiar circumstances.

For the purpose of collecting these observations, as well as on account of its own singularly interesting and important nature, I have reserved *Knowledge* for a place by itself. At the same time, there does not appear to be any thing peculiar in its mode of operation. I suspect it to be referable, in every respect, to the class of *progressive principles*.

That knowledge (considered in the comprehensive sense above explained) has a powerful tendency to improve the human character and condition, is an opinion which most readers will probably be disposed to admit. But it was not without considerable reluctance, that I could prevail upon myself to class it among the *cor-*

rupting principles. An attentive consideration, however, of literary and philosophical history, has forced upon me the conclusion, that knowledge itself, in a certain stage of its operation, is not only imperfectly useful, but in many respects positively injurious.

It is generally observed, that a shallow and imperfect knowledge is much worse than ignorance; that it leads inevitably to errors and follies of every kind; that it tends merely to obliterate the dictates of natural good sense, without substituting any thing better in their place. The frequent quotation of Pope's celebrated lines on this subject, sufficiently indicates the general sense entertained of their truth. Now, in the transition of the species, as well as of the individual, from a state of ignorance, to the possession of sound and real knowledge, this stage of imperfection must necessarily intervene.

The votaries of science, while it is yet new, and consequently in an imperfect state, seldom escape at least the faults of vanity and pedantry, which, if not very criminal, are, at least, calculated to render them extremely disagreeable. Elated with groundless self-conceit, they

look down with contempt upon the rest of mankind, and upon the affairs of ordinary life. Presuming on this boasted superiority, they conceive themselves entitled to trace out a new line of conduct for themselves; they claim an exemption, fatal alike to their virtue and their peace, from the common restraints and duties of society. Reason, when it first leaves the beaten tract, and begins to wander over the boundless fields of speculation, is seldom long of going astray. In this floating and uncertain state, passion comes in; an ingenious sophistry finds it easy to justify any conduct to which inclination prompts; and reason, instead of the support, becomes the corrupter of morality. Scepticism, on subjects the most deeply interesting to man, which is unknown to the rudest and most ignorant tribes, is the child of corrupted philosophy. Hardly is there a crime which it has not attempted to justify; or a truth, however essential to the welfare, to the very existence, of society, on which it has not trampled.

Imagination, too, when acting, as for a long time it inevitably must, without any restraint of judgment or taste, seems only to stimu-

mulate those irregular propensities which naturally arise in the uncultivated mind. War and licentious passions are the favourite themes of the muse in an age imperfectly civilized. Hence, by the graver moralists, she has been condemned as the corrupter of morality, and as prompting to the excess of voluptuous indulgence; an accusation which has been too much countenanced by the conduct of many of her votaries.

There is one circumstance indeed, which has hitherto rendered these evils less evident than they would otherwise have been. Knowledge, like all progressive principles, is an object of general desire; yet this desire does not seem to be quite so universal as those upon which the others are founded. It is, at least, later of being unfolded. At an earlier period, ambition centers chiefly in the display of bodily prowess, while pleasure attaches itself to the senses alone. Even after its cultivation has begun, it is long confined to a select few, generally men retired from the world, and possessing little influence on its concerns. To them, seclusion and moderate circumstances, (that is, the absence of the

other progressive principles) tend greatly to obviate the pernicious effects which *this* might otherwise have produced.

In order, however, to prosecute the subject with greater advantage, it will be useful to attempt an analysis of some of the leading symptoms of this corruption. Now it appears to me, that they may be all comprehended under the three heads of *Error*, *Excess*, and *Abuse*. On each of these, I shall make a few separate observations. And, in regard to all the three, it will, I think, appear evident, that while they are almost inevitable during the first stage of any scientific or literary pursuit, they may be confidently expected to disappear gradually before its continued cultivation.

ERROR.—The human mind, in its progress from ignorance to that degree of knowledge, which it is capable of attaining, does not proceed in a direct course, nor by steady and regular accessions. It is soon bewildered in a variety of mazes, and continues for a long time only to plunge deeper and deeper into error. This indeed seems to flow, as a natural consequence, from its progressive nature, when once

turned into a wrong direction. The mind of man, when placed at least in favourable circumstances, is never satisfied with what has been already thought and discovered on any subject, but seeks continually to make new advances. When it has once deviated therefore from the right path, the more rapid its progress, and the greater activity it exerts, it must always go the farther astray.

This tendency is increased by that presumption natural to the early teacher of science, himself unexperienced, and accustomed, among his votaries, to be listened to with admiring credulity. He sets sail without any suspicion of the rocks on which he is to split. Full of confidence, he trusts himself, without helm or compass, upon that unexplored and unbounded ocean, where inevitable shipwreck awaits him. It has been ingeniously, and I believe justly, observed, that before men think right upon any subject, they must first have exhausted all the absurdities which can possibly be said upon it.

But notwithstanding this tendency to error, which is at first inevitable, yet ample provision is made for its gradual extinction. Erroneous

opinions seem indeed to have a prior claim on the attention of mankind, and each, in their turn, seem destined to prevail for a certain period. But they have never been able to stand the test of long continued discussion. As soon as thinking men have leisure to examine their various relations, and to trace the consequences to which they lead, their absurdity becomes evident. And by means of letters, the record of former mistakes, and of the means by which they have been detected, is transmitted to posterity, so as to form a bar against their future introduction.

This tendency, however, varies considerably with the various nature of different pursuits. It diminishes in proportion as their objects are subjected to the senses, and placed within the sphere of daily observation. In those which are designed for the supply of obvious and physical wants, there is little room for mistake or illusion. The mechanical arts, therefore, and most of those employed in procuring the common conveniences of life, seem, in every nation, to be improved nearly in proportion to its advance in civilization. This observation, however, holds less in regard to such as are sub-

servient to pleasure; as appears from the extravagances of dress, and pernicious refinements of cookery, which take place in opulent and luxurious societies.

Geometry, in consequence of the narrow compass into which its reasonings can be brought, and of the appeal which its figures make to the eye, is one of the sciences in which error is most easily avoided. In every successive age, it seems to have received improvements nearly proportioned to the ardour with which it was cultivated. The elements of Euclid, after a lapse of two thousand years, continue still to form the foundation of mathematical science. The physics and metaphysics of Pythagoras, his monads, his triads, and his music of the spheres, have long since sunk into oblivion; but the relation discovered by him between the sides of a triangle, continues still to be received as correct, and to form the basis of trigonometrical calculation.

Physical science, like Geometry, is subjected to the senses; but its objects are much more remote and inaccessible. The investigation of facts becomes thus more arduous; the tempta-

tion to indulge in fanciful speculations is increased; and the detection of their futility is rendered more difficult. Accordingly, it has been doomed to experience a long period of very gross error. It is now a considerable time, however, since the proper mode of investigating it has been fully explained, and adopted with the most splendid success; so that it may now look forward with confidence to a steady career of improvement.

The best illustration of the progress of physical science, is afforded by that of astronomy, the branch of it which has been earliest brought to perfection. It seems sufficiently ascertained, that the Egyptians, the first people by whom it was cultivated, had formed a just idea of the solar system; and it is upon this remarkable fact, that Bailli has founded his fanciful hypothesis, with respect to an era of prior civilization. Natural judgment, combined with accurate observation, and not yet misled by visionary theories, seems, at this early period, to have led men to a conclusion which, afterwards, they could reach only by laborious investigation, and after wading through a long series of error.

The Greeks, abandoning the plain path of observation, formed new systems, the creatures of their own fancy. These systems, in consequence of attempts made to reconcile them with obvious phenomena, were rendered only the more perplexed and improbable; till at length their extravagance became such, as to authorise the celebrated impiety of Alphonso, who is said to have declared "that had he been at the creation of the world, he could have pointed out a better mode of arranging it." From this extremity of error, to a system founded on juster principles, the step was rapid. Dissatisfaction with preceding hypotheses, may be supposed to have predisposed men's minds for the reception of that of Copernicus; and since his time, the labours of a succession of learned men have carried on this science in a state of regular and constant advancement.

The objects connected with the science which analyses the faculties of the human mind, notwithstanding their proximity in point of place, are yet so far withdrawn from the cognizance of the senses, as to be neither easily nor surely investigated. The progress of this science ac-

cordingly, has been still slower than that of physics. It is only recently indeed that it has reached its *acme* of corruption, and has with difficulty found any sure ground on which to rest its foot.

Morality, considered as a science, exhibits some peculiar phenomena. So far as it consists in justness of perception, or the observation of actions in their immediate result, it seems, like the useful arts, to be, from the first, in a state of improvement. It is, like them, an object of daily and constant experience; and its effects, at least, are obvious even to the senses. Almost every civilized nation, therefore, though they may not practise, are yet found to understand the rules of morality better than their ruder progenitors. But when this science is to be rested on a philosophical foundation, when it is to depend upon enquiries into the human mind, and calculation of remote consequences, it seems to be at least as liable to error as metaphysical science. These processes are essential indeed to its establishment on a firm and permanent foundation; yet, from crude attempts to perform them, temporary evils must be ex-

pected to result. Another circumstance concurs, to retard the progress of moral science. Its errors are, in the magnitude of their consequences, far beyond any other errors. They tend to loosen all the bands of society, and threaten its very extinction. When therefore an opinion is broached, differing from those previously established upon this subject, an alarm is taken, and the general indignation of mankind is directed against the author of such a system. Even any part of it which may be harmless and just, is apt to share in the general proscription. A check is thus given to freedom of discussion, necessary perhaps, but which must render the science longer than it would otherwise have been, of arriving at maturity.

I have thus noticed some of the phenomena which attend the early prevalence of error. The next corruption to which science is liable, is that of

EXCESS.—Pursuits, at once new and agreeable, are always liable to be carried to excess. The observation applies equally to every department of philosophical enquiry, and to every varied form which can be assumed by genius or fancy.

Men, on being first introduced to any of these pursuits, are liable both to value them too highly, and to devote to them too exclusive an attention. They too often make them the sole standard of human excellence, and look down with contempt on all, however superior in other respects, who are not initiated into their secrets. Hence, also, single faculties receive an unequal and partial cultivation; and that balance between the different powers, in which the well-being of the mind essentially consists, is completely deranged.

The source from which this tendency is derived, makes it evident, that its duration can be only temporary. Every thing, after a certain interval, must cease to be new. The first illusion being gradually dissipated, the subject appears in its true colours, and takes its proper station among the objects of human interest and pursuit. As the circle of human knowledge approaches to its utmost extension, men will, at once, be less liable to meet with new objects, and less strongly affected with them. All the emotions of wonder, and giddy enthusiasm, which novelty inspires, are most conspicuous

in those, whose minds are previously ignorant and uninformed. The man of cultivated understanding acquires an internal steadiness, which exempts him, in a great degree, from these violent commotions.

Connected with this, is that oscillatory tendency, which exerts so powerful an influence on human character, both in speculation and action. But as I shall soon have occasion to consider it in the latter of these respects, I will then endeavour to bring into one view, what appears to be the whole operation of this very curious principle.

ABUSE.—The sources of corruption, hitherto examined, do not necessarily involve any moral delinquency, and are subjects of regret rather than of blame. But there are others, of which this cannot be said. The most ardent pursuit of science does not divest its votary of human interests and human passions; nor are these secure against taking an irregular direction. The philosopher, or man of genius, therefore, will often find himself tempted to employ, for their gratification, the influence which he possesses over the public mind. The temptation will be

the stronger, since the flourishing state of the arts is generally coeval with strong symptoms of moral corruption. Accordingly, we find that all the sciences most useful and most generally cultivated, have a science of imposture corresponding to them, and generally prior in point of time. Thus, astronomy was preceded by astrology, chemistry by alchemy, and, we may add, medicine by empiricism. Even the mathematical sciences, though in a great measure exempted from error, seem still subject to abuse. The Roman edicts, enjoining the banishment of mathematicians *and* magicians, plainly indicate the close affinity which was imagined to exist between the two characters.

Literature, it is evident, must be particularly liable to abuse in a country where its cultivation is very unequally diffused, as is generally the case at its first introduction. The more knowing part of the society will then find it easy to impose on the ignorant crowd. Yet the general cultivation of literature by men of the world, and its mixing in the affairs of life, is apt, in another way, to exasperate this tendency. Literature, then, comes more into the region of human

passions; it is impregnated with the virulence of party spirit; and its abuse is capable of being turned to greater account. These observations seem sufficiently illustrated by some of the aspects which it has recently assumed.

This is one of the evils which threatens to be of longest duration, since it is prompted by passions that are deeply seated in the human breast. Yet without calculating upon any moral improvement which might remove these irregular propensities, we may observe, that it is only in the crude and imperfect state of a science, that its abuse is at all practicable. When its principles are fixed, and when the knowledge of them has become general throughout a society, any attempt to misrepresent them could bring nothing but disgrace on its author. Accordingly, the sciences of imposture above enumerated, are now nearly extinct among the civilized nations of Europe; or, at least, can be practised only on the lowest vulgar. Moral and political philosophy have, in the present age, been the branches most perverted for the purpose of gratifying the irregular passions of men. From causes explained above, their improvement must

be posterior to that of the physical sciences. But there seems no reason to doubt of its ultimately ensuing; and these sciences will then become equally incapable, with the rest, of being converted into an instrument of imposition.

We have thus examined the nature and symptoms of that corruption to which science is liable, as well as the grounds for believing that these evils will be only temporary. It remains to consider the benefits which may be expected from it, when brought to that degree of perfection of which it is capable. For this purpose, it will be advisable to make a division of the subject, according to the different faculties which are the object of cultivation, *viz.* Reason, Memory, and Imagination; to which *Philosophy*, *History*, *and Poetry*, correspond.

PHILOSOPHY.—In the preceding analysis, which has been conducted chiefly with a view to philosophy, we have had occasion to trace the causes which lead inevitably to error, in the early speculations of man upon every subject not placed under the immediate cognizance of the senses. But there is something more required, than the mere formation of just and en-

lightened opinions. It is not enough that a theory be sound, unless those by whom it is embraced, understand also the best mode of applying it to practice. For a time, indeed, this application is inevitably attended with error, and productive of much evil and suffering. It is long before speculative men can be duly convinced of the necessity of attention to practical details, or can properly understand the relation which these bear to their general conclusions. General principles, when applied at random, without due attention to the circumstances of each particular case, will mislead far more certainly than the latter without the former. Hence the common observation, that in the business of life, men of theory, though they may sometimes benefit the public, always ruin themselves.

Another indispensable requisite of a philosophical speculation, is, that it should be complete and consistent in all its parts; the most minute point, overlooked or mistaken, will completely frustrate the practical result.

Philosophy, however, when she has once extricated herself from these difficulties, as she cer-

tainly will by the aid of experience, seems destined to raise human nature to a degree of elevation, which it could not otherwise have attained. Philosophy alone can form a steady, consistent, and dignified character, such as is truly worthy of a rational nature. That instinctive goodness, which arises merely from passions uninflamed, or from the absence of temptation, must always be extremely precarious. Being wholly dependent on external circumstances, a very slight change of these will obliterate every trace of it, and will give birth to the most extravagant and irregular propensities. But a system of conduct, which is founded upon mature reflection, and enlarged views, as it will possess more merit in itself, so it will acquire a steadiness, not liable to be shaken by any change of circumstances. Philosophy is equally requisite for consistency of character. Comprehensive views alone, can enable a man to bring the different parts of his character into harmony with each other. What strange inconsistencies do we observe in unreflecting characters, which not only unite the most incompatible features, but which vary every moment with the first gust of

passion. These irregularities can be removed only by the cultivation of reason, and by those systematical habits, both of thinking and acting, which it tends to form.

Philosophy is equally essential for establishing and preserving the purity of religion. Although the crude conceptions of an imperfect reason have sometimes been ranged in opposition to its truths, yet the different branches of philosophy, when brought to perfection, have always laid open higher views of order and design in the system of nature. By enlarging the sphere of the mind, and raising it above the influence of the senses, they have enabled man to form juster views of those great invisible objects to which it relates. Even Christianity, in ages of darkness, has been uniformly buried beneath a mass of superstition, and has regained its original purity, only with the progress of light and knowledge.

HISTORY.—In order that history may become a source of improvement, the first requisite is authenticity; and in this respect, it is for a long time extremely deficient. In the infancy of society, men attend only to those objects which

are subjected to the senses, and to those qualities belonging to them, which have an immediate relation to their wants and necessities. The knowledge of facts is then sure, though confined within a narrow compass. But as curiosity begins to extend beyond these boundaries, the means of gratification become more precarious; history then falls into the class of corruptible sciences. Events, remote in time and place, must, at a period when the means of communication are yet imperfect, be always involved in much uncertainty. This uncertainty leaves room for the operation of the passions, by which it is soon increased tenfold. There are few which may not come in for some share of gratification; but the most general, is the delight which is taken in relating and listening to tales of wonder. In the narratives of those ages, accordingly, the few facts introduced are so overloaded with fable, as to leave hardly any thing which can be trusted to as authentic. Yet there is no branch of knowledge, which is more important and interesting to man. Its objects too, have all been once exposed to the senses; while the most public and important may, by means of testimony, be ascertained with toler-

able accuracy. As society advances, men gradually learn to avail themselves of these means of information; and a high degree of civilization, in any nation, is uniformly accompanied by the increased authenticity of its historical records.

History is in two essential respects conducive to the improvement of society. It is, first, a school of morality. In the arts which relate to the beauty of external form, it is only by contemplating a variety of models, that a standard of ideal perfection can be formed; and in morals, too, it is by taking a wide survey of human character and action, that man must learn to distinguish between good and bad conduct, and that he will be impressed with the superior excellence of the former. The sphere of personal observation must be extremely limited, while its objects are seen through the mist of a thousand passions, which obstruct a free and candid exercise of judgment. But these events, when entrusted to the faithful page of history, are judged of by minds that are exempted from any bias of this kind. They can, in process of time, be accumulated to an indefinite extent, and can

represent man, acting in every variety of mode and situation. The moral sense, the first elements of which are deeply implanted in the nature of man, receives thus a varied and extensive cultivation. Yet here too we may find an example of the antecedent corrupting process. History, for some time, being filled chiefly with the crimes of successful ambition, whose lustre dazzles the untaught mind, exerts an influence rather injurious than useful. As the minds of men, however, are longer exercised in this direction, that first illusion vanishes; sounder and deeper views are taken; and the exertions which tend to benefit mankind, rise higher in the scale of estimation, than those which have destruction for their object. Accordingly, the civilized nations of modern Europe have been distinguished from all who preceded them, by juster views with regard to those objects of public concern, to which history has as yet chiefly related. And I believe it will be found, that when, in any society, a system of conduct becomes the object of real and heartfelt approbation, the general practice will soon, to a certain degree, correspond with it. Thus, among the nations above alluded to, prior at least to those convulsions

which have been produced by the French Revolution, we discover a humanity in war, a respect for the law of nations, and government, in its internal relations, assuming a mild and beneficent character, which are not to be found generally existing at any prior era.

History is useful in another respect, as forming the only sure basis on which philosophy can rest. Not that I am disposed to consider the generalization of facts, as constituting the whole of philosophy; but it forms certainly an indispensable part. It is the part, too, for which most time and labour are required; and is essential to the production of any great practical result. An attention to it, therefore, is now justly considered, as the grand criterion of sound and useful science.

The continual multiplication of facts, accumulated by the progress of time, which it becomes more and more impossible for any memory to retain, imposes the absolute necessity of generalizing and arranging them. The mind, incapable of comprehending such an infinite variety of particulars, must be satisfied with the general result. This, however, is a much more

delicate and precarious operation, than the mere ascertaining of historical fact. It is more of an intellectual process; while the vast variety of the materials, and the extent of space and time over which they are scattered, must render it infinitely liable to mistake and abuse. Where there is an absence of fair intention, which is peculiarly apt to happen in such discussions, this tendency must be greatly increased.

The same observations which have been made above on the improvement of philosophy in general, will apply to that of this important branch of it. It possesses, moreover, a peculiar advantage, in the continual augmentation and improvement of its materials. The constant addition of new facts, joined to the improved modes of investigating their truth, will be perpetually affording a broader and surer basis on which to speculate.

The last species of intellectual cultivation, is that produced by works addressed to the imagination. And these, though the production of elegant pleasure may be their immediate object, are yet intimately connected with the moral nature of man. By the refinement which they

induce, the mind is weaned from those sensual indulgences, which in a rude state were considered as the chief or only sources of enjoyment. And there is another view, in which the connection is still closer. Imagination, at least in early youth, has a considerable influence on conduct, and the colouring which it throws over the scenes of life, in guiding its future path. When properly directed, therefore, it may divest virtue of severity, may present her under a smiling aspect, and may thus prove a valuable auxiliary to the dictates of reason, and the sense of duty. This influence of imagination will doubtless, in consequence of the irregularities to which it is liable, prove often pernicious. The poetry of early ages is generally both fierce and licentious. Among savages, the song and the dance are the prelude of battle; and the sanguinary detail of bloodshed and slaughter has long furnished the heroic muse with her favourite theme. Wine and licentious love have been standard subjects for the poetical votaries of pleasure. Even in the most civilized age, every new form which imagination assumes, every new direction into which

that faculty turns itself, affords scope for error and abuse. But I believe it will be found, that the perfection of taste and of morals uniformly coincide; that in proportion as works of fancy are under the guidance of this faculty, they cease to exert any unfavourable influence on conduct. Accordingly, whenever any particular species of composition continues for some time to be cultivated in the same society, we see it gradually assume a milder and purer aspect. Thus, among the Grecian tragedians, the wild and savage Eschylus was succeeded, after a certain interval, by the pathetic and moral Euripides. A similar relation seems to exist between Aristophanes, Menander; Plautus, Terence; Ariosto, Tasso; besides a number of others, which it were tedious to enumerate. Such a rule cannot be expected to hold universally; yet I believe, that, where it fails, we shall find generally, if not always, that it is in consequence of some new style of writing introduced. When, therefore, all the forms of original genius have been exhausted, and nothing remains but to refine and perfect them; then,

as fancy will be under the guidance of correct taste, so we may expect to find her connected with, and supporting, purity of morals.

Upon the whole, I believe, we shall always find, that any vice or disorder which is habitually practised in any society, is connected with some narrow views, some error of reasoning, some irregularity of taste; and that as these, in consequence of continued cultivation, are corrected and refined, their influence upon human conduct will be more and more beneficial.

Before concluding this subject, I have one other observation to make:—The diffusion of knowledge through any part of a society which was before unacquainted with it, seems to be attended with effects nearly similar to its first production. The unexperienced votaries, who, for the first time, enter into its paths, are liable to all the errors and abuses which accompany its rudest stages. Writers arise, who suit themselves to the taste of this undisciplined multitude; and as literary celebrity must, in a great degree, be carried by numbers, the crude conceptions of the vulgar will thus acquire a currency superior

to the more mature speculations of philosophic understandings.

However, after a certain period, this inexperience will cease, and will be succeeded by that maturity, which is produced by a continuance of these pursuits. The increased number of votaries will then tend, both to enlarge the sphere of science, and to give it a more useful and practical direction. Indeed, when a leaven is once formed, the assimilation, it is probable, will go on with greater rapidity. Nor is it impossible, that, by a skilful use of those principles which act upon the moral nature of man, means may be found of considerably obviating these mischiefs. Meantime, however, they may sometimes serve as a warning to philanthropic legislators, to beware of urging on this process with too much rapidity. *

* These observations, it may be proper to notice, can form no objection to any plan for diffusing the first elements of knowledge through the mass of a nation. The limited measure of instruction thus conveyed, would, it is probable, according to what has already been observed of the other progressive principles, (Chap. V.) be directly and immediately beneficial.

CHAP. VIII.

ON CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES UPON WHICH NATIONAL CHARACTER HAS BEEN SUPPOSED TO DEPEND.

Such, so far as I can judge, are the leading causes which regulate the progress of society, as well as the moral condition of each particular people. There are others, however, of a more external and obvious nature, to each of which some writers have been disposed to refer the phenomena of national character. An examination of these will at once tend to remove objections, and to lay open some curious particulars in the structure of society.

I. *Of Climate.*

Among the hypotheses which have been framed respecting the origin of national character, none has been more generally received than that which derives it from the influence of climate. The illustrious author of the Spirit of Laws has cherished this hypothesis with a peculiar, and almost paternal partiality. Succeeding writers, swayed by the authority of his name, and by a few facts which seemed to give countenance to the system, have very generally adopted it, to at least a certain extent. By a few, however, and those of the first rank, it has been absolutely rejected.

My own enquiries upon this subject have led me decidedly to the conclusion, that climate (*physically* considered) has no influence whatever upon human character. The following observations, in addition to those of Hume,* Kaimes,† and Volney,‡ may, perhaps, be of some use in bringing this question to an issue.

---

* Essay on National Character.

† History of Man.

‡ Travels in Egypt and Syria.

A hot climate is supposed to produce a general sluggishness and unfitness for vigorous exertion, either of mind or body. Hence, its inhabitants are mild, indolent, incapable of opposing any vigorous resistance to those who attempt to oppress or enslave them. They become subjected, therefore, to a form of government altogether despotic. The same organization renders them feeble and timid, averse to the sight or shedding of blood; of consequence unwarlike, and an easy prey to every invader. Such is the picture which Montesquieu has drawn of them; let us examine how far it will apply universally.

The facts upon which that writer has rested his hypothesis, are all afforded by the great despotic empires in the south of Asia. Now none of these are placed immediately under the equator, where the heat might be supposed most extreme and enervating. In that region, despotisms, no doubt, exist, but they are tumultuous and turbulent despotisms; where, though the sovereign authority is subjected to no legal limit, it is perpetually checked and controuled by a powerful and barbarous aristocracy. In this

latitude are the Malays, the fiercest people under the sun; the inhabitants of Java, Sumatra, and other islands in the Indian Ocean, among all whom reigns an irregular feudal system, which is restless and turbulent beyond perhaps any other. Abyssinia is a legal despotism; but is one of which mildness and indolence certainly are not the basis. In the centre of Africa, direct beneath the burning Line, we find the Gallas, the fierce and cannibal tribes of Giagas, Ansicans, and Dahomeys, who, from time immemorial, have spread desolation and terror over that immense continent.

Among most of the states situated on the river Gambia, the form of government is purely republican. The same constitution prevails on the Gold Coast, in which the kings and chiefs, where they exist, possess a power little more than nominal. It is not till we arrive at the kingdoms of Whidah and Benin, considerably south of the Line, that we find feebleness and despotism.

In South America, only the narrow stripe of Peru answered to the description of Montesquieu. The numerous tribes covering that immense tract,

which extends from the Andes to the Atlantic, and from the river Plata to the Oroonoko, were all warriors and cannibals, living in a state of the wildest and the fiercest independence.

Thus, on making a circuit round this central region of the torrid zone, we find the prevailing character of its inhabitants to be directly the reverse of that which is conceived to arise from the influence of its climate. Should we suppose any thing peculiarly enervating in the more temperate latitude of the south of Asia, (though I know not upon what grounds such an opinion could be supported,) we need only recal the late events which have happened in our East India possessions; where warriors and founders of states have arisen, as active, as brave, and as bloody, as any that ever issued from the regions of the north. The revolutions of Persia, and the history of India beyond the Ganges, furnish additional arguments to strengthen this conclusion. The circumstance of these empires being so often subdued by northern invaders, seems to be owing to the military superiority possessed by a barbarous over a half-civilized people. Egypt, which was bounded by the sea on the

north, and had consequently no barbarous nations on that side, was repeatedly conquered, from the south, by the Ethiopians and Shepherds.

In regard to sensual irregularities, drunkenness is supposed to be peculiar to the colder regions, while that of the sexes is prompted by the influence of a warmer atmosphere. As to intoxication, in a convivial form at least, it is hardly compatible with that stillness and order which is considered as essential to the tranquillity of an absolute government. In the Asiatic empires, therefore, opium, a quieter mode, which merely induces a gentle delirium, is commonly preferred. But among nations which still retain their independence, this vice prevails at least as much in a hot climate as in any other. At the first discovery of the New World, the North Americans lived in a happy ignorance of intoxicating liquors, and became acquainted with them only through the intercourse of Europeans. But the tribes inhabiting the southern part of that continent, had already discovered the secret of a fermented liquor, to whose use they abandoned themselves with the utmost avidity. Lery,

after enumerating all the nations most famed for drinking, declares, that they must undoubtedly yield the palm to these. He describes them as spending in this employment whole days without intermission, and then beginning anew as if they had not tasted a drop. [1] A similar description is given of the negroes on the coast of Africa with their palm wine. [2] Other nations might be enumerated, lying in the same latitude, and among whom intoxication is a reigning passion.

With regard to the other species of disorder, it does certainly very generally prevail in the tropical countries. It is favoured there by that exemption from labour which is afforded by the fertility of the soil, and by the ease with which the wants of food and clothing are satisfied. In less fruitful climates, women, on whom man in the savage state has tyrannically devolved the task of labouring the ground, and providing for his subsistence, become little qualified either to feel passion, or to inspire it. But where this diffi-

[1] Apud De Bry (Frankfort, 1590) I. 175,

[2] Bosman's Description of Guinea, 408,

culty of subsistence is obviated, (by a plentiful fishery, for example,) the climate seems to oppose no obstacle. Hearne describes the manners of a people inhabiting the coasts of Hudson's Bay, as dissolute to the last degree, and declares, that "notwithstanding the severity of the climate, their licentiousness cannot be exceeded by any of the eastern nations."[1] The Kamtschadales, and the inhabitants of the isles to the north-east of Asia, are described as not much less addicted to these vicious propensities; which are not absolutely unknown even in Lapland and Greenland. On the other hand, the Caribs and Brazilians, in the torrid zone, maintain the same purity, and manifest the same proud indifference towards the sex, which characterize most of the North American tribes.

It may be proper to observe, that the instances now given, are not of societies fashioned by laws and institutions, to an artificial character. They are of men untaught, and following the impulse of nature; upon whom, therefore, if

[1] Journey to the Northern Ocean, p. 130.

upon any, physical causes might be expected to exert the most powerful influence.

While, however, the *physical* influence of climate can by no means be admitted, I am perfectly sensible, that it possesses a very powerful *moral* influence. But this influence is through the medium of the progressive principles. A warm climate tends powerfully to increase the fertility of the soil; it tends to diminish the necessity of clothing, perhaps also that of food. These circumstances are decidedly of a stimulating nature. They tend to increase numbers and wealth; and they diminish the necessity of labour. It is in warm climates, accordingly, that man first begins to display his powers; that strong passions are first unfolded. The fertile plains of the south of Asia, are universally respected as the cradle of arts and of genius. In consequence, however, of the rapid increase of the progressive principles, disorders soon rise to a great height; and nature, whose resources are always equal to her wants, induces a degree of coercion so great, as to check altogether the progress of the human mind. The whole extent of territory, from Egypt to China, has, from the

earliest ages, been occupied by vast despotisms, in which every thing has been stationary. The nations in the south of Europe followed; among whom these principles, subsisting in a more moderate degree, admitted of that degree of liberty which is essential to the arts. Their career was more splendid, and of longer duration: but its termination has been nearly similar. The middle and northern nations of Europe have now succeeded. Thus there has been, for the arts and sciences, a continual progress northward, from happier climates to those less favoured by nature.

Race.

There are dispersed over the earth a variety of different *races*, each of which is distinguished by certain peculiarities of external organization. And besides the grand and obvious distinctions, there are others peculiar to almost every district. In every country of Europe, and in

many provinces of each particular country, the inhabitants may, at first sight, be thus recognized. These peculiarities seem to be originally owing to climate and mode of life; but, when once formed, they are transmitted from one generation to another, and subsist often for a long period after a new combination of circumstances has taken place.

It has sometimes been supposed, that there are certain dispositions of mind corresponding to these varieties of external form; that national character, instead of being the result of the passions and habits to which men's situation excites them, is merely a stamp originally impressed upon certain tribes, and transmitted, without variation, to all their posterity. But it appears to me, that this is an opinion which cannot at all stand the test of an attentive induction.

Of all races, none is more marked, or has continued longer unmixed, than that which, under the name of *Mungal*, has, from time immemorial, roamed over the desarts of Tartary, or crowded the cities of China and Japan. Now there are, perhaps, no nations which exhibit more striking contrasts, in point of character, than

those of which this race is composed. What a difference between the mild, timid, avaricious, cheating Chinese, and the rough, brave, bold, honest inhabitant of Japan. Another variety is exhibited by the roving, hospitable Tartar. There is one circumstance indeed in which they all happen to agree; in their subjection to one form or other of absolute government. The supposition, however, of any connection of race with the political state of a nation, is refuted by the example of the African negroes, among whom every form of government prevails, from uncontrouled liberty to the most complete despotism. Almost every variety, both of manners and government, was to be found among the copper-coloured Americans. Thus we see, that the three races, which are the most numerous and widely diffused, have no appearance of being distinguished by any peculiar moral characteristics.

It must be admitted, however, that national distinctions, like those of external form, do seem to be, in certain cases, hereditary. There appear to be well authenticated instances of children, who have been taken, from the cradle, out of the hands of their savage parents, and educated

after the European manner; who yet, immediately on becoming their own masters, have renounced all the restraints and all the pleasures of society, and fled, with alacrity, to roam in their native woods. In such instances, there is evidently something which lies deeper than mere habit and education. But I think it evident, that the characteristic qualities which are thus propagated, are wholly unconnected with those external marks by which races are distinguished; that they are indebted to moral causes for their original formation, and on the removal of these causes will, in a few generations, be altogether obliterated. They seem also to be of a less durable nature. Mind is a more flexible substance, and yields more readily to the influence of altered circumstances. The effects above alluded to do not seem very perceptible, unless in a particular case, when the two extremes of civilized and savage society are brought, as it were, into contact.

Of the OSCILLATORY *Tendency in Human Affairs.*

There is in human nature (whether employed in thought or action) an extraordinary tendency to pass from one extreme to another; and several very judicious writers have been so struck with this circumstance, as to refer to it almost all the changes which take place in the human character and condition. They have compared human affairs to a pendulum, which vibrates continually from one side to another, without making the least real progress in any direction.[1] Were this the case, the conclusions to which we have been led by the foregoing speculations, must fall to the ground. It becomes necessary, therefore, before proceeding farther, to ascertain, as precisely as possible, the nature and limits of the operation of this principle.

[1] Aikin's Letters to his Son, Let. 1.—Malthus.

It has been a maxim almost universally acknowledged since the days of Aristotle, that the rule of right lies generally in a middle between two extremes, which must both be shunned by him who would follow the path of rectitude. But we have already had occasion to observe, that the mind of man, in all its early pursuits, has a strong tendency to excess. Now, were this excess to be entirely on one side, the most serious and lasting evils might ensue. Nature has provided for this danger. As soon as men find that they have gone too far in one direction, they speedily recur, seldom to the golden mean, but rather to some point which lies as far on the other side of it. And this may be no more than necessary for redressing the injury sustained. Oscillation, therefore, is seldom from truth to error, but rather from one error to its opposite. It forms a sort of *vis medicatrix* in the moral system. By alternately inducing opposite extremes, it counteracts the pernicious effects of each; and prevents either from attaining an ascendency, which would be permanently injurious to the interests of society.

It happens not unfrequently, that these two

extremes co-exist at the same time. In that case, two parties are formed, which, in consequence of the oscillatory tendency, acquire an alternate preponderance. Both are commonly in the wrong; but the opposite nature of their errors, preserves a certain fluctuating equality between the two sides of the scale.

We come now to the grand question; that which relates to the probable duration of this tendency. Now it appears to me evident, that it can be only temporary. Contemplating any small portion of history, it appears as a prominent feature; more so indeed than any general tendency, either to decay or improvement. But, on comparing together remote epochs in the history of society, its influence becomes hardly perceptible. There are instances, in which the possibility of such a retrogradation becomes palpable, almost to the senses. When we compare the condition of New Holland with that of Great Britain, we see nothing but the immeasurable distance; the amazing progress of the genius and industry of man. Between these two states of society there can be no fluctuation. Such transitory vicissitudes, therefore, may be

compared to hillocks, diversifying the surface of an extensive tract of country, which appear striking objects to the inhabitant of the plain; but sink into insignificance, when viewed from the top of an eminence commanding the whole district.

I would next observe, that the comparison of the pendulum may probably be carried a little farther. A pendulum, after performing a certain number of perpetually decreasing revolutions, will at length subside in the middle. The same, I conceive, will be the case with moral oscillation. Unexperienced man, when urged on by passion and novelty in his first career, generally runs far into one extreme; and on discovering his error, endeavours to correct it, by going as far into the opposite. But it is seldom long before the consequences teach him, how much he has been mistaken in both instances; and so long as the two failures remain on record, they form beacons, which, on future occasions, he will carefully shun. The next revolution must therefore be performed within a smaller circuit; and the sphere of oscillation will be continually narrowed, till, at length, no

space being left, it will cease altogether. Such I think must, to a great degree at least, be the result of history, when brought to the requisite perfection, and continued for a sufficient length of time.

We may remark lastly, that a habit of running into extremes, like excess, is closely connected with imperfection and deficiency of judgement. It ceases in proportion as men's views become steady and enlarged. It is the error of the vulgar, of persons of weak understanding, and violent passions. It is only in the imperfect and *floating* state of a science, that it is liable to be tossed up and down in this manner. As it gradually emerges, these aberrations cease; a fixed path is traced out; there is no longer the same tendency to go to one side; nor consequently the same necessity of reverting to the other. Thus in astronomy, the most advanced of the physical sciences, there can be no danger now of any wavering between the Ptolemaic and Copernican systems; no risk of men again bewildering themselves among cycles and epicycles. There seems reason to trust, that, as the other sciences arrive gradually at the same per-

fection, their leading principles will be established on a foundation of equal stability. And the same circumstances which augur the improvement of human reason, and the gradual extinction of its errors, conclude also against the prevalence of this tendency, considered as an abuse, and its necessity, considered as a remedy.

Of the Mode of Subsistence; including some remarks on the Principle of Population.

Among the modes of accounting for the varieties of national character, none seems more obvious than the difference of employment. Hunters, shepherds, the members of an agricultural and commercial society, have all been supposed to possess a peculiar character, derived from these various modes of procuring subsistence. This circumstance has certainly the most powerful influence in modifying the progressive principles. Upon it, in a great measure, must

depend the numbers of any nation, their wealth, and the degree of labour to which they are subjected. But it will be found, I think, that its action is altogether through the medium of these principles; and that otherwise it has no effect whatever. Nations agreeing in this particular are often the most different and opposite in their moral aspect.

Hunting nations, indeed, very generally display the same free, fierce, and rude character. Their circumstances must always be very nearly the same. The number thus supported will not much vary; there will be in general the same poverty, the same absence of refinement, and freedom from subjection. Some tribes in this state, however, (as the Ostiaks and Samoiedes,) are mild and quiet; and a number of minuter distinctions will hereafter occur. But it is the pastoral state which has been supposed to exhibit the most marked features; which has been peculiarly famed for innocence, and the indulgence of gentle affections. Nor will I wholly controvert this representation, though it has doubtless been greatly heightened by poetical fancy, and by association with the charms of

natural scenery. But it will apply only to the shepherds who inhabit the remote and sequestered districts of a civilized country. Restrained from violence by the coercion of regular government, removed to a distance from the bustling scene and the contagion of criminal passions, they exhibit one of the most interesting forms of primitive and uncorrupted simplicity. But when freed from restraint, and collected into large bodies, (for which their mode of life affords ample facility,) their character is widely different. The great pastoral nations, the Scythians, and the northern people of ancient Europe, have been always numbered among the most ferocious destroyers of the human race. The Giagas and other tribes in the interior of Africa, so noted for unparalleled ferocity, are tribes of shepherds. The Arabians, hereditary robbers and plunderers, belong to the same class. It is evident, therefore, that there is nothing in the mere occupation of pasturage tending to form a mild and peaceful character.

Agriculture has a strong tendency to insulate men, to fix them down to one spot, to check numerous and tumultuous assemblages. It is

among the class devoted to this employment, accordingly, that the primitive character has been longest retained. To produce it, however, the same circumstances must concur as in a society of shepherds; yet the wars of an agricultural nation, being periodically interrupted by the necessity of cultivating the ground, are seldom so long continued, and so destructive, as those of pastoral tribes.

The manufacturing and commercial state is, of all others, most inimical to simplicity. It crowds men into cities, multiplies wealth, and occasions the most widely extended and frequent communication. The only check which accompanies it, is that above alluded to,[1] arising from the increased necessity of labour. Hence, however, it is a general complaint, that commerce, while it augments the wealth and prosperity of a nation, is ruinous to its morals. Yet we must observe, that before this state of things arrives at its height, the improving process has already made a considerable progress, and will be continually making more; a process which these

[1] Pages 102-3.

suits have, in their ultimate effects, a powerful tendency to promote.

Before quitting this subject, it may be proper to make some observations on what has been called the Principle of Population; the relation which exists between the multiplication of the species, and the means provided for its subsistence. The speculations of Mr Malthus on this subject form one of the most important contributions to the science of political economy, which have been made in the present age; and as his fundamental doctrines rest on the basis of demonstration, so many of his inferences seem to be conclusive and unanswerable. It is not easy, however, for a writer always to avoid exaggerating the importance of his own discoveries. Somewhat of this tendency has, I think, appeared in Mr Malthus's application of his theory to moral phenomena. Nor can any miscalculation on this subject be wondered at, when we consider that these form no essential part of his system, and are only slightly and incidentally noticed.

Whether the principle of population presents an obstacle to the improvement of society, so

invincible as Mr Malthus seems to suppose, is a question which I may have occasion to discuss hereafter. At present, I shall merely consider its influence on national character. This, I cannot help thinking, has been considerably overrated by Mr Malthus; there are some passages, indeed, in which he seems to consider it as the prime agent in the moral history of the species.

I would first observe, that the operation of this principle is completely uniform; and its extent, as the author has shewn, is nearly the same in all circumstances. It does not seem, therefore, well qualified to produce that infinite variety, which takes place in the manners and character of nations. Even where the relation between population and subsistence varies most from the common standard, it does not appear that any corresponding change of character ensues. Thus in China, which has suffered so long and so severely under an excess of population, the same habits by which that excess was produced, still remain without variation.

There are two species of disorder, which, if any, may be supposed to be the direct result of the principle of population; I mean, those of

cannibalism, and those of irregular intercourse. Now with regard to the former, it will, I think, soon appear, that it is little, if at all, prompted by scarcity of food; but that its prevalence is to be ascribed almost exclusively to moral causes. In regard to licentious habits, the classes among which they are peculiarly prevalent, have always been the opulent classes; those who are least exposed to the pressure of want, occasioned by excessive population. The disorders for which Otaheite is so notorious, are chiefly among the higher classes. The apprehension of an excessive multiplication of this class, though it seems to have occurred to one individual, does not appear likely to govern the conduct of a society, so strongly characterized by thoughtlessness and want of foresight. Nor does this supposition receive any countenance from that polygamy, which is universally practised by the chiefs of rude nations.

In modern Europe, the class among which licentious habits are most prevalent, is that of the heirs or possessors of landed property. This is sufficiently accounted for by the opulence and exemption from labour, which fall to their lot.

But their circumstances, besides placing early marriage in their power, generally urge them to it by the apprehension of the family becoming extinct. The obstacles to marriage, arising from *loss of cast*, rest chiefly upon the middling class, whose conduct is yet the most regular and correct of any.

In short, it appears, that this tendency of population to exceed the means of subsistence, is to be considered rather as a provision made against the depopulating influence of human passions, than as tending, of itself, to inspire them. I am far from asserting, however, that it has no influence in forming the habits of a people; on the contrary, I shall probably have repeated occasion to recur to it, in order to account for phenomena of this nature. But I think it evident, that these effects neither strike so deep, nor extend so far, as has sometimes been supposed.

The principle of population tends to multiply the numbers of a society; but it diminishes wealth, and increases the necessity of labour. Its operation seems, therefore, to be, on the whole, of a privative nature.

BOOK II.

VIEW OF MAN IN THE PRIMITIVE STATE.

HAVING thus endeavoured to ascertain the principles on which the progress of society depends, our next object will be to apply these principles to the various forms in which it is found to exist, so as to produce an outline of the moral history of the species.

It will be readily understood, that this arrangement cannot be regulated by any principles of local or chronological order. In regard to place, this is evident at first sight; and though the natural effect of time be to forward the progress of society, yet it produces this effect in a degree so very unequal, that some tribes, even of the present day, seem to retain all their ori-

ginal rudeness. From them, on account of our superior means of information, rather than from the doubtful records of antiquity, we must derive our idea of the earlier forms of society.

In the classification, therefore, of the various tribes which have inhabited the earth, our attention must be directed solely to the degree in which the progressive principles exist, and to the effects which have resulted from their operation. Thus only can we form a real history of the progress of man; of what he has been, and is likely to be. Yet the various nature of these principles, and the different aspects which they assume, produce some difficulty in determining from which we shall take our standard. The choice must vary according to circumstances. In the infancy of social life, when all are equally poor, and equally free, numbers constitute almost the only ground of distinction; and from them chiefly the differences of character seem then to arise. But after a bond of political union has been formed, this circumstance, with the new aspect arising from it, becomes the most proper for being used as the distinctive character. Not only does coercion exert the most

powerful influence on the character of a society; but, being also, from its moveable nature, continually employed in modifying and controuling all the other principles, it becomes the most accurate test of the degree in which they exist. There are few circumstances in the character of a nation, which are not either produced, or indicated, by the form of its government.

It has been supposed, that every conclusion which can be formed respecting the earliest stages in the progress of man, must be beyond the reach of authentic history, and can rest only upon uncertain conjecture. But to conjectural history, farther than as an object of amusement, I have never been disposed to attach much value. The operations of nature are not regulated by the standard of human widom. The steps by which she proceeds in accomplishing her ends, when fully developed, discover striking marks of design; but they are almost always different from what might previously have been supposed or expected. In the course of my own enquiries, at least, I have rarely found her taking that course which we, *a priori*, might have imagined that she would take. Hence an attempt

to delineate her processes, according to our own previous ideas, can hardly fail of leading into error. Where materials were wanting, I have therefore preferred gleaning the few facts which history affords, to an indulgence in hypothetical supposition. But the truth is, that here, as in many other instances, those who seek will find; and that if the enquirer has recourse to conjecture, it will be less from the absolute want of facts, than from not duly availing himself of those which are within his reach. Of late, particularly, the intercourse of Europeans with these early tribes has been so much extended; their condition has been described by such intelligent and respectable authorities, as to afford to the enquirer of the present day, advantages greatly superior to those enjoyed by his predecessors. We have now under our eye, as it were, almost every possible form of human society: it seems desirable to seize and delineate them, before, by the influence of communication, it be all melted down into one mass.

Man, before arriving at the habits of pastoral life, and the measure of civilization which it in-

volves, is generally designated by the epithet of *Savage*. Concerning the character which he then exhibits, opinions have been various and contradictory. Nor can this be wondered at, considering the manner in which they have been formed. Some have drawn the picture merely from fancy; while others, conceiving its appearance at this early period to be universally the same, have formed their ideas of it, merely from observing the manners of some single tribe. But besides that savage life exhibits within itself the most striking varieties, and even contrasts,—we shall also find, on attentive examination, that there is a state prior to the savage state, and exhibiting an aspect totally different. This state is distinguished by the extreme smallness of its numbers, the complete absence of the progressive principles, the want of all political union, and by an estrangement from violence and bloodshed of every kind. I shall therefore call it the *Primitive State*. The two first forms of it are not very inviting, or possess, at least, only a negative excellence. It is not till we advance a little farther, that the character which it assumes is peculiarly amiable.

The forms into which it may be divided are three. The classification, for reasons stated above, is entirely determined by the circumstance of number.

1. Solitary Individuals.
2. Separate Families.
3. A few Families United.

CHAP. I.

SOLITARY INDIVIDUALS.

THIS is undoubtedly the most simple and uncompounded state in which it is possible for man to be found. Not that it can with propriety be considered as the state of nature, if indeed any state be really more natural than another. It is a state in which the human race could not continue to exist; nor can man be ever in his natural condition, when all those desires and powers, which are connected with social intercourse, lie dormant for want of objects on which to exert themselves. It is a state in which no body of men could be found existing; the examples of it are completely detached and insulated. In wild and thinly inhabited

tracts of country, it may occasionally happen, that children, lost or exposed, grow up amid forests and mountains, remote from all human tuition. They then exhibit a specimen of what man is, when left completely to himself. A few such phenomena have been known to occur; and it may not be uninteresting, to cast back our eyes for a moment on these first elements of humanity.

Linnæus, in treating of this subject, has enumerated ten individuals, found in this situation, of whom he had received accounts; and has mentioned some particulars, in which they all appeared to agree.[1] There are only three or four, however, with regard to whom I have been able to meet with any detailed statement —a youth, who was found among sheep in a remote and mountainous part of Ireland—another, called Peter the Wild Boy, found in the woods of Hanover, and brought over to this country—and the savage of Aveyron, who, in 1798, was caught in the forests of that department, and carried to Paris. Upon so narrow a

[1] Amœnitates Academicæ, VI. 90. 100.

basis, it would be premature to attempt drawing any complete picture of man as he exists in this situation. I shall content myself with merely arranging the facts which have been collected on the subject; or if any attempt shall be made to form general conclusions, it will be with extreme diffidence, and merely as hints which may be useful to future enquirers. Upon the whole, it appears to me, that a creature thus abandoned to himself, becomes *a quiet, indolent, stupid being, faintly distinguishable from the higher orders of animal nature.*

It is a singular circumstance, in regard to these persons, that they are universally found creeping upon all fours.[1] Linnæus notices this as an invariable characteristic; and the observation is confirmed by subsequent instances.[2] In this position, Peter the Wild Boy was seen running up trees, and leaping from bough to bough like

[1] Linnæus, Ib.

[2] I do not find it mentioned in regard to the savage of Aveyron; it seems to be understood, that he had only escaped from his parents at the age of four or five, when he would have already acquired the habit of walking.

a squirrel.[1] The Irish youth, in the same manner, ran rapidly amid steeps and precipices, and over sharp-pointed rocks, without ever receiving the slightest injury.[2] The anatomical structure of the body appears to undergo changes, suited to this singular mode of life. The heart is drawn up; the forehead becomes sharp and pointed; the fingers acquire a preternatural thickness and hardness.[3] An infant, in its first attempts at motion, always adopts this posture; and the continued use of it in the solitary man may arise from the want of instruction and example, which are necessary perhaps to develope the intentions of nature: or it may be the consequence of his perpetual intercourse with the lower animals, and having no other model upon which to form himself. On being introduced to the society of men, he learns, in a short time, to relinquish it.

In general, the physical condition of these

---

[1] Ant. Met. III. 65.
[2] Tulpii Observationes Medicæ, IV. 10.
[3] Ib.—Edinburgh Weekly Magazine, Vol. I.

persons appears to be excellent; their health sound, their strength great, and their swiftness unparalleled. The Irish youth, after escaping all pursuit, was caught only by nets that were laid for him.[1] Peter possessed such a degree of muscular strength, that no person of his own age could venture to contend with him.[2] They are completely hardened also against all inclemencies of the season. The Aveyron savage used to lie down amid wet and snow in the severest weathers, without feeling the slightest inconvenience.[3]

All accounts agree in representing these unfortunate persons as destitute of the use of speech. All those observed by Linnæus, and all since; Peter the Wild Boy, the savage of Aveyron, were all dumb. And where not introduced into society till an age somewhat advanced, the rigidity of their organs prevented them from ever acquiring that faculty. Itard,

---

[1] Tulpius, ut supra.

[2] Antient Metaphysics, III. 368.

[3] Itard. Historical Account of the Savage of Aveyron, (London, 1802,) p. 44.

though he claims some success in most other parts of his pupil's education, acknowledges, that in this he failed almost completely.[1] Even a settler at Botany Bay, who, to avoid the punishment of some crime, had fled from human society, and wandered for some years alone in the woods, was, on his return, hardly capable of speaking or understanding his native language.[2] Now if, according to the opinion of some of the ablest metaphysicians, language be necessary for the exercise of abstraction, while that faculty chiefly distinguishes the understanding of man from that of the brutes, it follows, that the man of the woods must stand very low in the scale of intellect. But though thus incapable of uttering any human sound, he often acquires, in its stead, that of the animals among whom he has been bred. The Irish youth was repeatedly heard by Tulpius, and by many of his friends, bleating like a sheep. A French girl, *(Mademoiselle le Blanc,)* though she possessed no hu-

---

[1] Linnæus ut supra.—Ancient Metaphysics, III. 373. Itard, Sect. 4.

[2] Turnbull's Voyage round the World, I. 118.

man voice, imitated to the life that of the nightingale and other singing birds.[1]

There seems to be a singular deficiency in the observation of all external objects which are not absolutely obtruded on the attention. This is not what we should at first sight suspect; yet it is a habit which solitude perhaps has always a tendency to generate. Conversation, and the exchange of mutual remarks, seem necessary for rousing and directing this faculty. When the savage of Aveyron was first brought to Paris, people were extremely curious to hear his remarks on the various new objects which that city presented; instead of which, says Itard, "they saw a disgusting, slovenly boy, indifferent to every body, and paying no regard to any thing." This apathy, however, entirely disappeared on any occasion connected with his physical wants. To the loudest sounds, even the report of a pistol fired close to his ear, he remained perfectly insensible; but the cracking of a walnut, a fruit of which he was extremely fond, instantly drew all his attention. This

[1] Tulpius, ib. Weekly Magazine, I.

faculty seems likewise to have been strongly attracted towards those grand phenomena of nature, which had been continually before his eyes, and the contemplation of which had formed, perhaps, his principal amusement. Any change, of whatever nature, which took place in the elements, affected him always with the liveliest emotion. [1]

The character of Peter the Wild Boy seems in this respect to have been nearly similar. Being desired by his master to fill a cart with dung, he readily undertook it, and, proceeding with alacrity, soon accomplished his task; after which, being unwilling to remain idle, he began to unload it with equal expedition. Now the slightest attention to the use which was made of the article, could not have failed to shew him, that he was thus undoing his own work. [2]

The effects arising from total want of culture seem often to resemble those produced by natural deficiency of intellect. Eccentricity at least, if not a tendency to fatuity or madness,

---

[1] Itard, 17. 46. 79. 38-9.

[2] Ancient Metaphysics, III. 372.

seems incident to the man, who is shut out completely from the society of his kind. Of the hermits, who, from a mistaken religion, devoted themselves to absolute solitude in the deserts of the Thebais, a large proportion were affected with mental derangement.[1] The Aveyron savage, on being examined by Pinel, was declared to exhibit all the symptoms of confirmed idiotism.[2] The same idea seems to have been entertained by some with regard to Peter the Wild Boy. Yet that, in neither, the deficiency was natural, seems sufficiently proved by the statements of Monboddo and Itard.[3] The Aveyron savage displayed no want of intelligence in any thing which related to his wants. In the course of six weeks, he learned to dress his food with the most minute and careful attention. From the first period of his introduction into society, he possessed a language of gesture, which he employed in a manner the most correct and discriminating. He learned also to distinguish

---

[1] Gibbon, ch. 37. [2] Itard, 28.

[3] Ancient Metaphysics, 65. 370. Itard, 100-4. 111. 196-8.

the alphabetical characters, and even to use them in supplying his defect of speech; though his progress in this attainment was retarded by the most furious aversion to the restraint which it rendered necessary.

Of a being thus concentrated in himself, the moral nature must be at least very limited. In general, however, he appears to be peaceable and harmless. Man is not born a beast of prey. It is not till his passions have been inflamed by assembled numbers, by the ambition and emulation which they kindle, that he becomes the enemy of his kind. A quiet good-nature seems to have generally characterized these insulated beings.[1] Provocation, however, sometimes roused them to furious passions. In particular, there appeared a violent impatience under the controul to which they were subjected; an eager desire to escape, and expatiate, as before, through the immensity of nature.[2] These passions, however, generally evaporated in mere agitation and

[1] Anc. Met. III. 371.
[2] Ib. 372. Itard, 71-2.

restlessness, without prompting them to acts of violence.

It is mentioned of Peter the Wild Boy, that he had always shewn an entire indifference to the sex, unless when purposely and jocosely forced into an amour.[1] This is the only fact which I have met with on the subject. Should it appear to be general, it would be of importance, as tending to shew, both that this propensity is naturally less powerful than has sometimes been supposed; and also that it is more of a moral, than of a physical nature.

---

[1] Ancient Met. III.

CHAP. II.

SEPARATE FAMILIES.

After considering detached individuals, we are naturally led to families who live entirely by themselves. Here our materials are somewhat more copious: for, though man be naturally a gregarious animal; though, wherever it is possible, at least a small number assemble for the purposes of society and mutual protection, yet it sometimes happens that they are separated by an imperious necessity. This is particularly the case among the tribes bordering on the Arctic circle, who are arrested, by the severity of the climate, in the very first stage of social life. The sterility is here so extreme, that a wide circuit of territory becomes necessary to supply a single family with the means of subsistence. In

Lapland, the rule of property is, that wherever an individual settles, he becomes proprietor of a space of ground extending six miles in every direction. [1] Thus individuals are necessarily kept at a wide distance; and seldom, even by accident, can they meet, or unite with each other, as they wander over the immensity of their frozen desarts. The parish of Kautokeino, which is 200 miles in length and 100 in breadth, contains only a hundred and two families.

Although the progressive principles be at a very early period productive of moral corruption, yet this effect does not seem to follow in the very first instance. Their presence, in a certain degree, seems necessary at once to unfold the powers of man, and to give scope to his best affections. Absolute seclusion, extreme hardship and want, benumb and stupify him. Such, so far as I can judge from their scanty records, is really the effect of this state of privation, on

---

[1] Acerbi's Travels in Sweden, Finland, and Lapland, II. 14.
[2] Ibid, 77.

the tribes we are now considering. Every action is that of a being whose powers are but half unfolded; every thing indicates debility and deficiency of character.

The first feature in the disposition of a Laplander, is supreme and unconquerable indolence. An abhorrence indeed of regular industry is common to all savage tribes, with the single exception of those which compose the following stage. Almost every other, however, has some kind of violent and tumultuous exertion, in which they place their highest delight. But these, unless urged by the most pressing necessity, remain sunk in a state of perpetual torpor. Brandy only can rouse them for a moment; but unless the stimulus be constantly repeated, they quickly relapse. Connected with this is a helplessness, like that of a child, on all occasions which require any extraordinary exertion. They either sink in despair, or in endeavouring to overcome them, exert only feeble and abortive efforts.[1]

---

[1] Scheffer's History of Lapland (fol. Oxf. 1738) 14. Acerbi, II. 46, 47, 59.

The Laplanders are a timid and fearful people.[1] This seems to be one symptom of that general debility which marks their character. There is nothing to inspire them with those strong passions which prompt men to set danger at defiance. Nothing is so much calculated to encourage a man, as the presence and sympathy of his fellows. Visions and other superstitious impressions take place uniformly in solitude, and are speedily removed by the presence of company. Hence to the Laplander, nursed in perpetual solitude, every thing which passes the sphere of his ordinary observation, becomes an object of mysterious apprehension. The appearance of a stranger, the slightest unexpected occurrence, throws him often into long fits, or paroxysms of terror.[2] They are altogether unfit for military service. Gustavus Adolphus, it is said, when hard pressed for troops, conceived the idea of raising a regiment of Laplanders, but was soon forced to give it up as a vain attempt.

---

[1] Scheffer, 13. Olaus Magnus (Lond. 1658) B. III. Ch. ii.

[2] Russia, or an Historical Account of all the Nations that compose that Empire, (Lond. 1780) I. 8.

In a people so situated, we may naturally expect a disposition to seriousness and gloom. Melancholy is the child of solitude. Society and plenty, the great cheerers of human life, are both wanting. Alone with his family, the Laplander wanders on, with nothing but dreary wastes around him on every side. He meets with nothing to enliven his existence, or to break its monotony. Hence suicide is common; many are content, even thus, to escape from a life which presents only a cheerless unvaried round.[1]

This combination of fear and melancholy, naturally renders them liable to the influence of superstition. It is wonderful, considering their limited faculties in other respects, how complicated a mythology they have formed. Not only the earth, but two regions above, and two beneath, are all filled with their appropriate deities.[2] A mystic drum, with the sounds which it utters, is their oracle, to which they resort on

---

[1] Acerbi's Travels, II. 19.

[2] Acerbi, Remarks on Lapland, Sect. 23.

all occasions for advice and direction.[1] And, what we should hardly expect, even in this small and poor society, are found men, who endeavour to promote their own interest and consequence, by working on the fears and credulity of their fellow men. Lapland has been long the favourite abode of witches and conjurors, where powers above humanity are claimed by beings that are scarcely entitled to the epithet of human. The conjuror possesses power over the winds, which, like Æolus of old, he confines in bags, and sells at a high price to the credulous mariner.[2] Invisible flies (suggested, probably, by the musquitoes, which, during the summer months, swarm in the forests of Lapland,) are ever at hand to execute vengeance on those who have dared to offend him.[3] He claims also, along with the rest of his fraternity, the power of foreseeing the future. Votaries resort to him, often from a great distance, to whom, after receiving presents, and throwing himself

[1] Scheffer, 50. 58. Acerbi, Sect. 25.

[2] Scheffer, 58.

[3] Acerbi, Remarks on Lapland, Sect. 25.

into frightful contortions, he delivers oracles that are believed to be infallible. [1]

Nor are timidity and gloom the only symptoms of this deficiency in the character of the Laplander. The benevolent affections, having so few objects on which to exert themselves, remain concentrated within himself; and a selfishness ensues, which excludes not only social, but even the nearest relative affections. Of this a Swedish writer has adduced some instances, which seem to pass all comprehension. A Laplander having drowned himself, his wife was obliged to give six rein-deer to her father-in-law before he would assist in the interment of his own son. [2] Avarice, the vice of little minds, reigns even in Lapland. If a woman were deaf, blind, and a hundred years old, she is said to be certain of suitors, provided she possess a plentiful supply of rein-deer. [3] The small sums which they have gained by the sale of their furs, are often buried in the earth; and as their reserved

[1] Ouvres de Regnard (12mo, Paris, 1758) I. 128.

[2] Hægstrom, Description de la Laponie Suedoise, apud Hist. Gen. des Voyages, XIX. 525. [3] Ibid. 522.

character prevents them from ever disclosing the place where they have been deposited, it is by accident only if the discovery be ever made. [3]

Nor, though guiltless of deeds of violence, are they exempt from a certain impotent species of malignity. Slander and detraction are said to compose a favourite subject of their ordinary conversation. [1] It is asserted also, that witchcraft is sometimes resorted to, in the hope of destroying their enemies by secret methods; though as such relations are naturally mixed with fable, much reliance is not to be placed on them. [2]

Their situation, and the inclemency of nature, necessarily exclude them from much excess in sensual gratifications. Those few, however, which are within their reach, are sought for with extraordinary avidity. They supply the only means of filling up the vacuity of life, and compensating for the absence of all refined and social enjoyments. To gluttony they are uni-

---

[3] Acerbi, II. 125. Russia, or Historical Account, &c. I. 22.
[1] Scheffer, 13. [2] Ibid, 14. 59.

versally addicted; and it seems to be one of the few objects which rouse them from their habitual apathy. A late traveller observes, that, in the course of his journey, if any *angelica* appeared growing in sight, it was impossible to prevent his attendants from going out of their way, or even, if in a boat, from landing, in order to posses themselves of their favourite plant.[2] Cookery, being looked upon as the highest and most important of all employments, is confined exclusively to the men; no woman is ever allowed to interfere. Their attachment to ardent spirits is well known. Of these, every man who travels in Lapland must lay in an ample provision; otherwise no service need be expected. The wizards strenuously inculcate the belief, that brandy is essential to the success of every magical operation; hence those who wish to consult them, are careful to bring with them a copious supply of that article.[1]

There seems less distinction between the sexes than is usual among rude tribes; nor is any pe-

---

[1] Acerbi, II. 63.

[2] De la Motraye's Travels, (Lond. 1730) II. 314.

culiar drudgery imposed on the females. They are exempted indeed from one employment, which every where else is considered as peculiarly their own. This is the employment of cookery, which, as above observed, is practised entirely by the men; less, however, I suspect, from any regard or attention to their partners, than from the high importance which they themselves attach to the operation.

After all, if we view the Lapland character on its negative side, it will not lose in comparison with that of the most polished nations. Great crimes, murder, robbery, and adultery, are almost unknown. Before their intercourse with strangers, they are said to have been strictly honest; and though *now* they are no way disinclined to cheat *them* when opportunity offers, yet between each other, this virtue continues to be practised.[1] Still there is a radical deficiency in their character: no energy in action, no warmth in feeling; nothing which can place them high in the scale of moral and intelligent natures.[2]

---

[1] Scheffer, 14. Acerbi, II. 158.

[2] See note (1) at the end.

With regard to the Samoiedes, we have not the same detailed accounts as in the case of the Laplanders; and travellers vary extremely in the representation of their circumstances. Some describe them as assembled in considerable bodies, and governed by chiefs or kings; others, as carrying on war.[1] Perhaps, in the wide extent of the northern coast of Asia, different tribes may have made very different advances in arts and population. But, in general, I find them painted in colours nearly similar to those of the Laplanders; the same external appearance and mode of life; the same apathy, feebleness, and timidity of character; the same freedom from great crimes; the being, in short, in the words of the historian, *magis extra vitia quam cum virtutibus.*[2]

---

[1] Voyages aux Indes. I. 52, 159. (Amsterdam, 1754.)—Purchas's Pilgrims, III. 556.

[2] Russia, or Historical Account, &c. III. 13. Hist. Gen. des Voyages XVIII. See Note (2) at the end.

CHAP. III.

A FEW FAMILIES UNITED.

Of all states of uncultivated society, this is the best and most amiable. The progressive principles, food, numbers, and intercourse, seem to exist in that moderate degree, which gives scope to the affections of nature, without stimulating them to any violent and pernicious excess. Hence though, as individuals, the members composing it must doubtless be liable to that imperfection which is inseparable from humanity, yet there is hardly a virtue in which, as a society, they do not excel. Above all, gentleness of manners, a kind and affectionate disposition, seem to be leading and universal features.

This state, though somewhat more frequent than the former, is still very rare; and from the

necessary thinness of population, the whole number composing it must be exceedingly small. Still, however, on an attentive survey, we may discover a few little communities scattered over the face of the earth, which seem almost to realize the fabled innocence and felicity of the golden age.

The finest picture of primitive society which I have any where met with, is that given by La Peyrouse[1] of a little village which he visited on the western coast of Tartary. It consisted of four houses, the residence of as many families. He remained there for eight days, and had thus a pretty intimate view of their manners. There is not, he declares, on the face of the whole earth, a race of better men to be found. The most affectionate respect for the aged, the most tender union with each other, marked all their deportment. During the whole of his stay, he never was witness to the slightest quarrel. Theft, so general among savage tribes, seemed to be a thing of which they had not the remotest idea. All the stores of dried fish, which they had prepared for

[1] Voyage round the World, Ch. XIX.

winter, were, notwithstanding the presence of so many strangers, left open and unguarded, without the least symptoms of fear or precaution. Some, who were setting out on a journey of a few days, left their door fastened by a latch, to keep out animals; but they took no precaution against human kind. Even that avidity for presents, which is still more general, was not to be found here. It was with great difficulty, and by a management of peculiar delicacy, that they could be prevailed upon to accept of the slightest gift; and even then it was found impossible, without giving pain, to avoid accepting in return another of equal value.

This purity and delicacy of all their moral feelings, forms a singular contrast with the total absence of physical refinement. They were nasty beyond expression. They tore raw fish with their mouths, in the most disgusting manner. Such a smell issued from their clothes, as made it disagreeable to approach them. Nothing can better exemplify the difference, formerly observed, between the progress of man, in regard to mind, and to external accommodation.

All the circumstances essential to this stage, seem to be here united. The population is very small, but still sufficient to admit of a certain measure of social intercourse. They had nothing which could be called wealth; but the fish, which they caught abundantly in summer, and which they possessed the art of drying for winter, placed them beyond the reach of absolute want. Thus, every thing united to inspire gentle and moderate passions; while there was nothing prompting to violence and disorder.

The most remote of the Scottish western isles, is a little rock, the abode, from time immemorial, of a few families, who live almost wholly secluded from the rest of mankind. Immense cliffs surround it, on the perpendicular sides of which numerous sea-fowl build their nests, and afford to the inhabitants the chief source of their subsistence. The whole number of inhabitants is computed to be under 200; their circumstances, therefore, place them in the class we are considering, and their character is described as perfectly corresponding. Great crimes, theft, murder, and adultery, are quite unknown; the greatest harmony prevails in their intercourse with

each other; the poor are liberally supplied by a weekly contribution; and strangers, whom stress of weather has driven upon their shores, meet always with the most humane and hospitable reception. Their historian expressly compares their manners, their freedom, and happy simplicity, to that of the golden age.[1]

Far in the Northern Ocean, and almost at the extremity of the habitable world, lies a small rock, the habitation of about 120 fishermen. Our only knowledge of them is derived from a voyage performed thither in the fourteenth century, by an Italian of the name of Quirini.[2] After a most calamitous navigation, when his whole crew were on the eve of perishing by disease and famine, they were thrown upon this island, where they were received with the most extreme kindness. The moment their disaster was heard of, the whole village ran out, and vied with each other in lavishing on them every possible assistance. "Happy," says he, "was the man who could

---

[1] Martin's Voyage to St Kilda. Macaulay. Buchan.

[2] Ramusio Navigazioni et Viaggi, (2d ed. 1554) I. 147-8, 154-6.

first get into his bark, to come to us, and bring us a supply of provisions. But what joy was it to us, after all our troubles, to find ourselves visited with such love and charity!" They were then taken home, were divided among the different cottages, and entertained for three months in the most hospitable manner. During this period, they found the character of their hosts entirely corresponding to the first specimen which they had received of it. The greatest mutual affection, the most anxious, and seemingly most disinterested desire of pleasing and making each other happy, appeared in their whole deportment. In gentleness of manners, and unsuspecting honesty, they seem to have resembled Peyrouse's villagers. In the intercourse of the sexes, our navigators observed the most singular purity, accompanied with an affecting confidence, which proved them strangers to the very idea of criminal intercourse. In short, they declare, that during the whole of their residence on this dreary rock, they felt as if they had been in Paradise.[1]

[1] Ibid. I. 154.

The island of *St John*, the smallest of the *Azores*, is the abode of somewhat less than 200 negroes. These, by a Captain Roberts, who spent some time there, and observed them in very trying circumstances, are described to be the mildest and most amiable of all the African tribes. His vessel being in danger of being wrecked on their shores, they came with spontaneous offers of service, the magnitude of which affected him in the greatest degree. Being afterwards taken ill on the island, he experienced every kind of attention. From the first he was assured, that he need be under no anxiety as to his subsistence, for that they would zealously supply every thing of which he could stand in need. Accordingly, never a day elapsed that some of the islanders did not visit him, bringing presents of game, or other provisions. On his offering spirits, they declined it, saying, that "though it was good, yet they had seen it do much harm." In short, he speaks of their moral qualities in terms of the highest admiration.[1]

These instances seem sufficient to prove the

[1] Histoire Generale des Voyages (4to) II. 401.

existence of this state; and it may be thought, that to enter into any farther detail is both unnecessary, and likely, from its uniformity, to become tiresome. Yet the subject is so interesting, and, from this stage having hitherto passed unobserved, it is so important to establish it on the most extensive possible induction, that I must intreat my readers' indulgence, while I attempt to glean a few more examples.

Here, however, it may be proper to observe, that neither this, nor any other stage, is often to be found existing in a state of complete purity. The greater number of societies appear in that state of transition from one to another, partaking somewhat either of that which precedes, or of that which follows. Thus, in most of those which we are now to notice, although the peculiar character of the present stage may predominate, there will still be found a tincture, either of Lapland apathy, or of savage turbulence.

The southern extremity of North America is separated from *Terra del Fuego* by a narrow sea, bordered on each side by ridges of prodigious mountains, covered with everlasting snow. The height of these mountains, joined to the

immeasurable extent of ocean which surrounds them on every side, renders the cold much more intense than any where else, at the same distance from the equator. Of this a striking instance is given in the narrative of Captain Cooke's first voyage. On the 22d of January, (the longest day in those latitudes,) Sir Joseph Banks, with a party from the Endeavour, having set out on a botanical excursion, were overtaken by an immense fall of snow, and two of their number perished with cold, in the midst of summer. The natives, who inhabit these dreadful coasts, are described as existing in the lowest state of human wretchedness. They were half naked, though shivering with cold. They devoured fish raw, while the blood ran down on their faces and clothes.[1] As, however, they have boats, arms, and some fishing implements, their numbers are not altogether contemptible; and small parties of twenty or thirty were frequently found together.

Writers seem to dwell chiefly on the misery of their external condition; on their apathy and

[1] Voyages de la Compagnie Hollandoise aux Indes, I. 578-9.

want of curiosity; and some indeed seem to be completely benumbed with want and wretchedness. When, however, they do touch upon their character, they allow it to be at least harmless;[1] and wherever little assemblages have taken place, it appears in a still more favourable light. Captain Cooke observes, of a village where he spent some days, that though there was no appearance of subordination, yet they lived in the utmost harmony and good fellowship; and Bougainville describes the party with whom he met as most peculiarly amiable and affectionate. High value appears to have been placed on female propriety. Some men who were on board an English vessel, seeing a boat putting off for the shore where their women had been left, shewed the utmost misery and anxiety on account of the dangers to which their virtue might be exposed; though the hideousness of their aspect seems to have formed ample security, even against the licentiousness of an European crew.[2]

---

[1] Voy. aux Indes. ut supra.—Cooke passim.—Forster's Observations, 251.

[2] Wallis ap. Hawkesworth, I. 407.

The inhabitants of *Van Diemen's* Land on the southern coast of New Holland, appear to be still more destitute of mechanical ingenuity. Though inhabiting the sea-coast, they have never contrived any means of drawing a supply of food from the waters, but depend entirely on the shell-fish which they can pick up on the shore. They go entirely naked. Their best habitations are those hollowed out of the trunk of trees; for in the temporary houses of bark which they sometimes raise, the accommodation is still more miserable.

The little which is told us of their moral character is all favourable. Anderson observes, that they had nothing of that wild and fierce aspect usually met with among savage tribes. They were chearful, kind, and hospitable. The females indignantly rejected the improper advances, which were made by some of the sailors.[1]

A cluster of small islands in the Indian Ocean, called the *Nicobar* Islands, are said to be inhabited by a harmless, good-humoured, and hospitable race. They dwell in small villages, planted along the sea-coast, and containing not more

[1] Cooke's Third Voyage, I. 111-14.—Labillardiere, Ch. 10.

than forty or fifty persons. And as they are not in the habit of migrating from one place to another, it is seldom that any great assemblages take place. Yet, whether from the too great facility of subsistence, or from an approximation towards the savage state, they are addicted to two of its vices; those of indolence, and of intoxication. And of the little labour which is performed, an unequal share is thrown upon the female sex. They are not bloody; but they seem already to have acquired a love of fighting; for vehement boxing matches are carried on between the different villages. This vigour of character, however, is often felt to the cost of those, who, trusting to the smallness of their numbers, attempt making an inroad upon their shores.[1]

For a particular detail of *Greenland* manners, we are indebted to the generous piety of the Moravian missionaries, who, with the view of spreading the knowledge of Christianity, voluntarily took up their residence in these frightful

[1] Asiatic Researches, IV. 121-7.——Symes's Embassy to Ava, I.

climates. The worthy fathers, who had doubtless formed the most gloomy idea of the heathens and savages they were here to meet with, were astonished to find a degree of order, tranquillity, and generosity, such as they had never witnessed in civilized society.[1] One exclaims, "according to outward appearance, the life they lead is angelic, when compared to that of our European Christians!"[2] Their whole conduct is regulated by the most studious desire to do nothing which can be offensive to each other. They have not a single abusive word in their language: nor do they lose their temper even under serious injuries, unless when carried to the greatest excess.[3] Ten families, strangers to each other, often live in a hut not exceeding ten fathoms in length, and the same in breadth, yet all goes on with perfect quietness and harmony, and less disturbance takes place, than would, among us, in a house which contained only two families of near relations. In these houses they live together in a manner the most

---

[1] Crantz's History of Greenland, I. 158. 169. 172.
[2] Ib. I. 340. [3] Ib. I. 185.

friendly and social, having all goods, as it were, in common. When a man has caught a seal, he divides it liberally among the inhabitants of the same cabin, retaining often the least share to himself.[1] They are chearful; yet there is nothing boisterous or indecent in their mirth; they look upon the quarrels and tumultuous merriment of Europeans, as little better than madness. Their dances are conducted with such order and propriety, that, by a stranger, they might be mistaken for the performance of a religious rite; and indeed they are so contrived, as to become a powerful vehicle of moral instruction.[2] Their family affections are said to be beyond those of every other nation. The mothers doat on their children with the most extreme fondness, are miserable when they are out of sight, and, on losing them, often put an end to their own lives.[3] This affection, too, is fully returned. Parents, who have children grown up, are always sure, not only of support, but of every kind of respect and attention. The mother, even after

---

[1] Crantz's History of Greenland, I. 169.
[2] Ib. I. 135-6. [3] Ib. I. 300.

the marriage of her son, continues always the principal person in the family, and has the sole management of the household; the wife is only, as it were, her servant.[1] In that Elysium, which they have formed to themselves in the abysses of the sea, Torngarsuck and *his mother* are the presiding divinities; from which we may naturally infer, that they consider this as the happiest of all relations.

It must not be concealed, however, that there is another and less favourable side, on which their character may be viewed. The missionaries, on a closer examination, found reason to suspect, that their friendly and generous conduct, so far as it was exercised beyond the circle of their immediate kindred, was very much prompted by a regard to interest and reputation; and of this some very strong instances are certainly given. Thus, when a woman has lost her husband, and has no other near relation, unless she can make herself useful in the character of a servant, she and her children are in

[1] Crantz's History of Greenland, I. 186. 163.

danger of perishing with hunger: for though, when a gratuitous distribution is making, she may come in for a share, yet no regular support is afforded her; nay the neighbours sometimes take advantage of her destitute condition, to plunder her of the little that remains.[1] In short, their benevolence, though it may lead them readily to perform any easy services, seems incapable of great or long continued efforts. When a Greenlander is in danger of drowning, his neighbours will give their assistance, provided they happen to be at sea along with him; but if on shore, they will not take the trouble of going out to his aid.[2]

Here then a question arises: supposing the other societies to be subjected to the same test of long continued observation as that of the Greenlanders, might they not exhibit the same deformities? If so, we must certainly make a very ample deduction from their supposed excellence. Now here I would observe, that, in almost all the former, gentleness, at first view, appears

[1] Crantz's History of Greenland, I. 189, 192-3.
[2] Ib. I. 189.

as the distinguishing characteristic; while the Greenlanders are rather characterized by a certain roughness. The social qualities observed among the latter, appear to be chiefly of a negative kind, and to consist in giving no offence to each other; while the former exhibit every symptom of the most sincere and tender affection. The Greenlanders seemed to have none of the virtuous disinterestedness observed in Perouse's village; on the contrary, the missionaries complain, that they made a traffic of their ears, and that no sermon was listened to, unless accompanied by a present.[1] Their manners too, though on the whole not dissolute, were far from exhibiting that perfect purity so conspicuous in most of the others.[2] The liberality of the St Kildans towards the destitute, forms another contrast to Greenland manners. In short, there appears in the latter strong symptoms of incipient turbulence. Though not in general blood-thirsty, yet murder is not extreme-

[1] Crantz's History of Greenland, I. 192.
[2] Crantz, Egede.

ly rare; nay, some are said to practise it with the mere view of "rendering themselves famous and formidable;" though revenge be the common motive; and there is sometimes a slight tendency towards cannibalism.[1] Thus it appears evident, that, though generally belonging to the present stage, they have arrived at the very brink of the savage state; and that all the restraints of shame and prudence are necessary, to prevent them from breaking into open disorder.

The character, as well as the external appearance, of the *Esquimaux*, seems closely to resemble that of the Greenlanders. They appear, however, to be somewhat rougher and more disorderly. Where they are represented by Europeans in a worse light, the cause may probably be found in that hostility which the unwarrantable conduct of the latter has excited.[2]

A late French navigator has made us acquainted with a tribe, situated in a high northern latitude on the west coast of America, to whom

[1] Crantz, 103.

[2] Charlevoix, V. 263. Cartwright's Journal of a Voyage to the coast of Labrador. Forster's Discoveries in the North. See Note (3) at the end.

he gives the name of *Tchinkitanyans*. They seem considerably to resemble the Greenlanders. They are praised for industry, for domestic union, for tender parental and filial affection. At the same time, they seem to have a considerable tendency to fierceness and licentiousness. The whole inhabitants of an extensive bay were found to be about 400; which, though not a very great number, was yet somewhat beyond what is usual in such tribes. [1]

Asia, consisting of a continuous tract of land from the equator to the frozen ocean, may be supposed, beginning at the latter point, to exhibit a gradual increase of the progressive principles, and a succession of those stages to which that increase gives rise. This, however, would require, what is plainly impossible, that the progress in the arts should be the same throughout. The southern parts, accordingly, are too much altered by conquest and civilization, to retain any traces of this gradation. In the northern, however, where the natives are still rude, and where the degree of subjectioni s too slight, ma-

[1] Marchand's Voyage round the World, ch. iv.

terially to alter their character, this progress may be very distinctly perceived. In treating of the Samoiedes, who lie farthest to the north, we have found reason to refer them to the same class with the Laplanders. Proceeding southward, we come next to the *Ostiaks*; among whom a milder climate admits of a somewhat less scanty population. Now these seem to belong to the present class. The few travellers, who have penetrated into those wilds, give us the most favourable view of their moral qualities. Robbery, murder, adultery, even drunkenness, are said to be unknown; and they are kind and charitable in the highest degree. Such was their honesty, that travellers, even alone and without defence, found themselves in perfect security.[1] A remarkable instance of this virtue is given by one of them. He had dropt his purse, which was afterwards picked up by an Ostiak boy, who carried it to his father. The latter then ordered his son to lay down the purse in the place where he had found it, and to cover it with branches, that the owner, if he ever returned,

[1] Hist. Gen. des Voyages, XVIII. 520.

might find it untouched. Accordingly, about three months after, the traveller again passing this way, and mentioning his loss, his worthy host informed him of what had happened, and joyfully conducted him to the place where the money had been deposited.[1]

Of any of the stages delineated in the present volume, few traces are to be found in the writers of antiquity. The invention of letters took place at a more advanced period; and the voice of tradition was too faint, and too fabulous, to convey any distinct knowledge of previous occurrences. The intercourse between civilized and rude nations, by which this defect might have been supplied, and which, in modern times, has taken place on so great a scale, was then very rare. Yet, even of the very early stage which we are now treating of, some notices, though rather slight and doubtful, are to be found in the accounts given by ancient writers of the rude natives of Scythia and Germany. This character indeed does not at all appear in those which border on the civilized nations of Europe and

[1] Hist. Gen. des Voyages, XVIII. 521.

Asia. But as we advance to the northern extremities of those countries, we arrive at a few tribes, who are painted in the most amiable colours; as the happiest of men, strangers to discord, who, for their innocence and justice, were held sacred by all the surrounding nations. No one offered injury to them; on the contrary, when contests arose in their neighbourhood, they were frequently chosen as arbiters. Their country was a place of refuge for all who were exposed to the attack of an enemy; no violence was to be dreaded by him who had entered those revered precincts.[1] The remoteness of these tribes leaves doubtless some room for suspicion; yet we may observe, that historians have actually placed them in that situation, where the difficulty of subsistence would necessarily confine their multiplication within narrow limits.

It remains only to make a few general observations, which may apply, without distinction, to all those tribes.

It does not appear, that coercion is at all re-

[1] Herodotus, IV. 23. Plinii Historia Naturalis, IV. 12. Mela, I. 21. III. 5.

quisite for the production of this form of society. The absence of temptation, and a situation inspiring only moderate and gentle passions, supersede its necessity. At Perouse's village, in Quirini's island, and among most of the other tribes, no vestige of it existed. Every one was equal and free; yet the most perfect tranquillity reigned. The island of St John was subject to the Portuguese, and commanded by a governor of their appointment. This, however, was evidently an extrinsic and accidental circumstance, not arising from any thing within the society itself. Accordingly, though penal laws existed, there was seldom or never any occasion for enforcing them. If the natives were ever guilty of any little offences, the punishment consisted merely in putting them into an inclosed park, by way of prison, out of which they were hardly ever known to attempt making their escape.[1] The inhabitants of St Kilda are in a situation nearly similar, being subjected to a coercion which there is no occasion to exercise.

[1] Hist. Gen. des Voyages, II. 403.

But though these societies stand in no need of outward and visible forms of coercion, yet there is one of a milder nature, to whose operation they are peculiarly liable. This is the restraint arising from a regard to character. It has evidently no place in a state of entire seclusion; while, on the other hand, in a numerous society, the offender is lost in the crowd; he shelters himself under the multitude of those who are guilty of similar trespasses. But in a small circle, where every individual is intimately known to the rest, the preservation of character becomes a most important and necessary object.

I am not disposed to think, that in the purer forms of this stage, much necessity exists, even for this milder check. But as it approaches towards its close, and as vicious inclinations begin more and more to unfold themselves, the dread of censure becomes a very powerful means of curbing these inclinations, and of retarding the growth of savage propensities. In the case of the Greenlanders, the missionaries seem to consider its action as both very powerful, and very necessary. They are not ambitious of fame or distinction; no scope is yet afforded

for the indulgence of this passion. But they are exceedingly apprehensive of losing their good name.[1] It is with the view of acting upon this disposition, that they compose those songs which are recited at their dances and festivals. Here the poet, in a strain of good-humoured satire, rallies each individual upon those parts of his conduct, which seem deserving of censure; and the apprehension of making a figure in these compositions, is said to be one of the most powerful means of deterring them from irregular behaviour.

I know not whether to number, among the forms of coercion, one, certainly the most interesting and virtuous of all others; the reverence which is paid to old age. Among the villagers visited by Perouse, it was noticed with particular admiration. The negroes of St John are said to be worthy in this respect of serving as a model to all nations.[2] Yet it is so completely spontaneous, and implies so little exercise of authority, that I know not whether it is not to be

[1] Crantz, I. 172.

[2] Hist. Gen. des Voyages, II. 401.

considered as a mere interchange of respect and affection.

Industry, a steady attention to obtain the means of subsistence, distinguishes this stage both from that which precedes, and from those which follow it. In the former, there is no activity of any kind; while that of the latter is so ill-directed, as to be worse than indolence. But here, the principle of activity, moderately excited, directs itself towards those humble and useful exertions, which their situation prescribes. The St Kildans celebrate in their rude songs the man who has mounted steeps before inaccessible, or has pursued the tenants of the rock to their secret recesses; and lament the fall of those who perished in the daring attempt.[1] Superior skill in striking the seal, is the highest glory to which a Greenlander can aspire.[2] Strangers to war, and its guilty trophies, their ambition is all centered in peaceful arts, and useful labour.

In most cases, the frugal plenty which reigns, notwithstanding the severity of the climate, clear-

[1] Buchan's Description of St Kilda.
[2] Crantz, I. 201.

ly indicates the existence of this virtue. Even the greatest want of ingenuity does not imply the absence of quiet and persevering industry. The inhabitants of Terra del Fuego, are thus described:—"They are a quiet people, going forth to their labour in the morning, returning to their habitations at the evening's close." I am sorry to find, however, that the inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land, and the Nicobar islands, have already begun to adopt the savage practice of throwing an unequal share of labour upon the weaker sex.[2] Very different is the conduct of the Tchinkitanyans; there the sex enjoys an entire exemption from toil; in consequence of which, they have become so corpulent as to be unable to walk without difficulty.[3]

Considering the limited means of information enjoyed by these tribes, it cannot be expected that their views of religion should be very just or enlarged. Still their superstition, if it be one, is mild and innocent, free from those impure and barbarous rites which

---

[1] Byron ap. Callender, III. 460.

[2] Labillardiere, (Lond. 1800) II. 53. Asiatic Researches, IV. 123.

[3] Marchand, (8vo. Transl.) I. 360.

are afterwards introduced. Where Christianity is known, it is no where better observed. In St Kilda, it is said to prevail in all the purity of the primitive ages, equally free from the extremes of enthusiasm and superstition.[1] The inhabitants of Quirini's rock had become converts to the Catholic religion, which they observed with the utmost strictness. The belief of a future state, existed in a singular, and almost extreme degree. The death of their friends was to them a matter of joy. The day after, a festival was held, and attended by all the friends of the deceased, who expressed their happiness on this fortunate transition, which they conceived him to have made.

---

[1] Martin. Buchan.

BOOK III.

VIEW OF MAN IN THE SAVAGE STATE.

AMONG the forms of society, which we have now surveyed, we observe a very different character from that, to which we give the epithet of *savage*. We see the absence of crimes; tranquillity maintained without the restraint of government; no fighting, no bloodshed; the guilt and the miseries of war unknown. A very different scene is now about to open.

Before, however, we enter more particularly into the consideration of the savage state, some preliminary observations may be necessary, on the general causes which produce that violence, and those disorders, by which it is stained.

It may at first sight appear, that among a handful of naked savages, wandering over an immense extent of country, the progressive principles can operate only in a very small degree. On a closer inspection, however, we shall find, that several of them prevail to an extent, greater than in some of the most cultivated and crowded societies. This arises, in the first place, from those gregarious and migratory habits to which savage tribes are universally addicted. There seems in all men, and in these more particularly, a desire to crowd together, and to form themselves into large assemblages; where their passions may find ample scope, and where they may mingle in those scenes of bustle and turbulence, where all uncultivated minds find their highest delight. Nor is there, in their ordinary employments of hunting and fishing, any thing to check this propensity; any thing to confine or fix them down to one place. The woods and the rivers may indeed be sooner exhausted by a numerous party; but when that happens, nothing prevents their common removal to another district. Hence they are generally found roving together in bands; or if at any time,

they separate for the facility of procuring food, are always ready, when any tumult arises, to flock together, and increase it.

A variety of circumstances, which, in a civilized society, separate men from each other, and thus temper the violence of their passions, have no place here. There is no gradation of ranks, no difference of professions, no artificial means of seclusion. There can be no closer intercourse between human beings, than that which takes place between the different members of such a society. And, in consequence of the wide range of their wandering life, they are frequently brought into contact with tribes whose habits and character are different from their own; a circumstance which generally inspires more violent passions, and fiercer hostility.

But the grand circumstance to be attended to, is, that while the progressive principles thus take place to a very considerable extent, there exists hardly any check on their operation. Although hunting be a precarious source of subsistence, yet the time which it requires is exceedingly small. A few hours chace will often supply a family with food for several days; and

then their improvidence is such, that they immediately resign themselves to total indolence. At all events, whatever drudgery may be necessary, is thrown upon the females; while the time of their lords is left almost wholly at their own disposal. And if there be little check from labour, there is much less from coercion. That grand remedy against the turbulence of human passion, now first beginning to be necessary, has not yet unfolded itself. There is no restraint upon the conduct of individuals, no form of justice, no punishment for crimes, except the resentment of the injured person. The progressive principles are left to operate almost wholly unchecked.

We may observe finally, that the tendency of the principles, is as yet wholly of a corrupting nature; there is no mixture of the second part of the process. The unimproved and untaught mind, destitute of all internal stability, abandons itself wholly to every passion which its situation inspires. Hence all their propensities display a wild, fierce, and ungovernable character, peculiar to themselves; and they are hurried into atro-

cities of which civilized nations, unless in a paroxysm of frenzy, are always incapable.

Of all the passions which sway the savage breast, the most prominent, evidently, is ferocity; a supreme delight in fighting and bloodshed. So strong is the general impression upon this subject, that the very name has become synonymous with the utmost excess of inhumanity. This character indeed we shall find to be in a great measure confined to the free forms of the savage state; but, in these, it does certainly reign almost unrivalled. It may be interesting, therefore, before entering into a more particular consideration of these forms, to enquire into the peculiar circumstances which turn into this channel the tide of increasing corruption.

The first cause is suffering. This in ill-regulated minds is constantly followed by irritation. In common life, when we see a man fretful and out of humour, we think it sufficiently accounted for, if he has met with any unpleasant occurrence. Hence the violent popular outcry which arises in seasons of scarcity, and the slow diffusion of philosophical principles upon this subject; men being to the last degree unwillir

to listen to any argument, which would deprive them of objects on which to vent their fury.

To this cause I am inclined to refer a most singular custom which prevails among the savages of New South Wales. Every man there, on losing a near relation, thinks himself bound to commit an act of violence upon some person or other, however innocent, or however little connected with the deceased; and of this act death is sometimes the consequence.[1] The custom appears to be merely the result of a vague sentiment of ferocity, generated by the suffering; for in rude minds ferocity is the result of social as well as of selfish sorrows.

A state of continued suffering tends to weaken the mind, and to induce apathy or habitual peevishness. On the contrary, when occasional and intense, it rouses to violence and fury; and in consequence of the excitement being frequently repeated, this state of mind becomes habitual. Now this is precisely the kind of suffering to which the savage is liable. To hunger, the severest of physical ills, his precarious mode of

[1] Collins's History of New South Wales, 2d ed. 377-9.

subsistence must frequently expose him. It is even customary with Indian chiefs, before going to war, to undergo a fast of several days; a practice, which, as it tends to diminish their physical strength, has robably been adopted on account of its efficacy in whetting their fierceness. We might add, the blows and wounds which are received in combat, were not these rather a consequence than a cause; though there is no doubt a powerful re-action.

The second source of bloodshed is the desire of displaying power by the production of important effects. This display may be made either by the faculties of mind, or of body. But at this early period, the former are imperfectly unfolded, and held in little esteem; it is to the latter chiefly that a man must trust for raising his reputation. In the earlier stages, this power is usefully employed in waging war with the brute creation, in destroying those animals which are noxious to man, or capable of supplying his wants. Still, however, the most marked and striking display of bodily strength, undoubtedly consists in killing or maiming a fellow creature; and as resistance must of course have been made, the

atchievement is accompanied with the consciousness of a flattering superiority. As, therefore, fierceness increases with increasing numbers, the savage becomes disposed, on the slightest provocation, to give this evidence of his prowess. The same propensity contributes, no doubt, to the gratification which they derive from the infliction of deliberate and exquisite torture; and to the delight which they display, while appearing as actors in those scenes of horror.

But the most powerful of all these motives is that thirst of revenge, which is ever the ruling passion in the savage breast. And notwithstanding the wild excess to which it is carried, this motive must be allowed to arise from a source more respectable than either of the former. In a state of society where no form of government, nor mode of administering justice, is as yet established, the resentment of the injured person, or of his friends, affords the only check against the perpetration of every kind of violence. This right of private revenge seems to be then necessary in the absence of better restraints, and for establishing in the society a certain imperfect and

irregular species of coercion. Yet it is certainly carried to a height, which no circumstances can justify. It partakes nothing, too, of that levity and volatility which predominate in every other part of the savage character. An injury, once received, is never forgotten. The resentment of the sufferer, if unsatisfied during life, goes down with him to the grave, and descends, like an inheritance, from generation to generation. The injurer may hide himself in the darkest corner, he may fly to the farthest extremities of the earth: But the hatred of the injured man is immortal; no absence, no time, can abate its fury. And when, at length, the wished for hour of retaliation arrives, it is inflicted with the same unrelenting fierceness, as in the first moment of awakened resentment.

Of these three sources of malignant passion, it is in general the last only which is avowed; and often, perhaps, it is of it alone that the individual himself is conscious. The two former (if I may borrow a French expression) operate *sourdement*; they powerfully predispose to this passion, but they do not immediately excite it.

CHAP. I.

IMPERFECT DIVISION INTO TRIBES.

The tribes belonging to the former state, as they are subject to no government, so they are bound together by no political ties. Similarity of circumstances produces similarity of character among the inhabitants of the same country; but this is the only bond of connection. Neither the whole, nor any part, compose what can be called a nation. The case is nearly the same with respect to this first stage of the savage state. The intercourse is still almost wholly between individuals; there is no foreign power to be the object either of alliance or hostility. War, therefore, as being an international concern, has as yet no place. The fierceness kindled by the

increase of numbers, can be exerted only by the members of the society against each other. Accordingly, the characteristic of this form of savage life, appears to be—*Private, Individual, Quarrelling, and Fighting.*

The people inhabiting that part of *New South Wales*, where the English colony of Botany Bay has been established, are very thinly scattered, and miserably destitute of the first conveniences and comforts of life. Their huts are merely the bark of several trees joined together, where men, women, and children, lie heaped together promiscuously. Fishing is almost the only source of subsistence; for they have no tame animals, and are wholly unacquainted with any mode of cultivating the ground. They have canoes, however, though of a rude construction, in which the men take fish with long spears, and the women with the hook and line;[1] and as they live in a very temperate climate, their numbers are considerably greater than those of any tribe whom we have yet had oc-

[1] Collins's New South Wales, 360-1.

casion to notice. Though considerably behind the native inhabitants of America, they are decidedly farther advanced than those of the neighbouring coast of Van Diemen's Land. They are generally seen roving in parties of 40 or 50, and on any great occasion, speedily assemble in much greater numbers. In no tribe is there a more total absence of all subordination; the old men and fathers of families enjoy indeed a certain respect, but little or no authority.[1] The effect which these circumstances produce upon their character is abundantly visible.

They go almost quite naked, the women only wearing a slight covering about their middle. But they are amply supplied with spears of various shapes and dimensions; the throwing of which against each other, forms the chief employment and pleasure of their lives.[2] The children, from their earliest years, spend their time in practising this art, in beating and dragging about the females, and every one weaker

---

[1] Collins, 351-4. Turnbull's Voyage round the World, I. 80-1.

[2] Collins, 376-7.

than themselves.[1] At the age of fifteen, they have a tooth drawn, and after many other barbarous and superstitious ceremonies, are declared men, and admitted to put these lessons in practice.[2] From that time, the procuring of food becomes quite a subordinate consideration; the grand object of their lives being to prove their dexterity in inflicting, and constancy in suffering, wounds and blows.[3]

The display of prowess seems to be here the leading cause of ferocity. They are even governed by certain ideas of honour, beyond what could be expected amid such extreme rudeness. They will not throw a spear against an adversary, without first warning him to cover himself with his shield. They return the darts which he has thrown, thus furnishing him with weapons against themselves.[4] Even while smarting under his blows, they will often shew no signs of resentment, but call him a brave fellow, and their good friend.[5] This constant

---

[1] Collins, 364.
[2] Ib. 364-74.
[3] Ib. 375.
[4] Collins passim.
[5] Ib. 237.

fighting, therefore, seems to be less an effect of mutual enmity, than a wild gladiatorial game, for the display of those qualities on which alone they value themselves. Revenge, however, sometimes prompts to darker and more diabolical deeds. Having conceived a rooted enmity against any of their countrymen, they steal upon, and stab him at midnight. [1] This is supposed to be done, less from cowardice, than in order to make sure of their victim. On being discovered, they must stand up and expose themselves for some time to the spears, not only of all the relations of the deceased, but of every one who chooses to avail himself of the opportunity. The offender often sinks under the wounds he receives on this occasion; but should he recover, which, from their excellent habit of body, is often the case, he escapes without any farther injury.

It does not appear that there is any thing among these people, to which we can give the name of war. They are divided indeed into families, or tribes, each of which have a certain

[1] Collins, 237. 360. 385.

portion of territory appropriated to them. Between many of these, a certain degree of jealousy and enmity subsists; and the member of any hostile tribe experiences some preference, as the object of their quarrels. Marriage, in particular, being, as will presently appear, a decided act of hostility, is generally exercised upon the members of a tribe at enmity with their own. But the preference is very far from exclusive. If considerable bodies are often seen fighting together, these are as often members of the same, as of separate communities. Their battles too, are generally a mere extension of individual contests. No sooner has one man quarrelled with another, and spears been thrown, than they are joined by the byestanders, who are connected with the parties, either as friends, or as enemies, and who, as fighting is their choicest amusement, can never see it going on without taking a share. It seldom fails indeed, when any considerable number is collected together, that spears are thrown, and blood shed, out of mere wantonness, and without any provocation. [1]

[1] Turnbull, 67-8. Collins, passim.

Collins has given a description of one of these contests, which, he says, was more formal and regular than usual. A young man in a different part of the country, whose sister had been carried off by one of the savages at Sydney, feeling more resentment than was common on such occasions, collected a party of his friends, for the purpose of avenging this injury. They arrived late in the evening, and, having made no secret of their intention, found a party assembled to oppose them. The two hostile bands remained all night in perfect tranquillity, and did not begin their contest till early next morning. From that time, they continued throwing spears at each other, till two in the afternoon; after which they desisted. They returned each others weapons, and never threw without warning, in the same manner as in their individual contests. A good many wounds were received; but upon the whole, little serious mischief was done.[1] The whole has more the air of a tournament, a mere trial of strength, than of serious warfare; and breaths nothing of that horrible

[1] Collins, 380.

fierceness, which rages between contending tribes, after the distinction which separates them is fully established.

The wide extent of country, reaching from *Hudson's Bay* to the *Northern Ocean*, appears, from the extreme rigour of the climate, to be still more thinly inhabited. The mode of life, however, is extremely wandering, both for the convenience of hunting over a country ill stocked with game, and for carrying furs to the English factory. This gives them a facility of assembling in pretty large parties. Mr Hearne, to whom we owe most of our information respecting them, mentions, that the one with which he set out, was in the course of the journey joined by several others, and particularly by one which amounted to 200. [1] The numbers, however, seem on the whole to be smaller than at Botany Bay; while the wide range of territory over which they wander, brings them sometimes into contact with tribes, whose character is dissimilar, and thus gives rise to occasional war. [2] These

[1] Hearne's Journey.

[2] Why this circumstance should produce the effect here ascribed to it, will appear in the next Chapter.

circumstances combine in giving them somewhat of a milder character. Murder is rare; nor do they employ against each other any deadly weapons. Their contests, though almost incessant, consist chiefly in robbing each other of their wives and property, boxing, wrestling, and hauling each other by the hair.[1]

In our progress from the northern point of Asia, immediately south of the Ostiaks, we find the *Tunguses*. With regard to the manners of this nation, I have not been able to meet with any very intelligent or satisfactory detail. I find it, however, distinctly stated, that the practice of duelling prevails among them; which being characteristic of this form of savage society, and of this alone, seems clearly to point out the class to which they are to be reserved. Since their subjection to Russia, indeed, it has been strictly prohibited; but it is still understood secretly to prevail; and in consequence, multitudes disappear without any known cause to which their death can be ascribed.[2]

---

[1] Hearne, 105. Mackenzie, Hist. of Fur Trade, 125.

[2] Levesque Histoire de Russie, VI. 316—18. Russia, or Historical Account, &c. III. 70—118. See Note (4), at the end.

From the details, however, which have been received with regard to the two first of these people, we may be enabled to ascertain some other general features in their character. The view will not be favourable. There are other tribes which are guilty of more flagrant enormities; but there is none which is so disagreeable and unamiable throughout. In subsequent periods, the corrupting and repressing principles, mutually crossing and modifying each other, produce a mixture of good and bad qualities; but here the first alone operating, give rise to a character bad in almost every point of view.

There is no state in which the female sex are so degraded, or treated with such brutal indignity. Among a society, indeed, where every thing is carried by force, and the law of the strongest, their condition cannot be supposed to be very enviable. To display bodily strength by the infliction of blows, seems to be the universal ambition of the other sex; and the females, on account of their inferior strength, are selected as favourite objects on which to signalize this prowess. Courtship, above all, which

every where else is the period of courtesy and attention, is here a scene of the most brutal violence. There is no creditable way of procuring a wife, except by force.

Even among the Greenlanders, who, as formerly observed, are verging towards savage habits, this custom has begun to prevail. The man's female relations, having previously secured the consent of the parents, lay hold of the daughter, and carry her, in spite of a resistance not always feigned, to the hut of the bridegroom.[1] In this manner, they think it incumbent on them to provide him with one wife; but if he be inclined for a second, he must find her for himself. Having made his choice, therefore, he himself, watching his opportunity, seizes, and drags her home by the hair.[2]

This is trifling, however, when compared to the atrocity of the savages of New South Wales. Here the violence is perpetrated altogether by the man. He fixes upon some female belonging to a tribe at enmity with his own; he watches the opportunity of finding her at

---

[1] Crantz. I. 158. [2] Ib. II.63—130.

a distance from any of her friends; and, having provided an enormous club, first fells her to the ground with blows. He then seizes her, as she lies insensible and streaming with blood, by the arm, which he drags with a violence that seems sufficient to displace it from its socket. Stones, or broken trees upon which she may strike, neither divert him from his course, nor stop its velocity; till at length he bears her, more dead than alive, to a place of safety.[1] This is the whole marriage-ceremony; from that moment she becomes his wife. The whole course of their subsequent connection is entirely conformable to this outset. Some of the women's heads, on being shorn, were found wholly covered with scars arising from wounds received from these loving partners.[2] Wonderful, however, is the power with which the human mind is endowed, of adapting itself even to the hardest situations. The females of Botany Bay are said to shew each other their scars and bruises, as subjects of triumph; and to be no way dissatis-

[1] Collins, 362. [2] Ib. 375.

fied even with that rough species of courtship, which is practised on them by their paramours. [1]

Among the Northern Indians, the same custom prevails, under a form somewhat less savage. Here the violence is committed, not upon the female herself, but upon her husband, or present possessor. Any man, who has chosen to cast his eyes on an Indian woman, has only to challenge the husband to a wrestling match; in which if he be victorious, she is immediately transferred to him. She herself, destitute of all power over her own destiny, stands by, at once the spectator and the prize of the contest. [2] Seldom a day passed, that some challenges of this nature were not given and accepted; and one woman is mentioned, who was lost and won by ten husbands in the course of an evening. [3]

There is no limitation as to the number of wives which any man may possess. He takes as many as he has strength to lay hold of, and food to maintain. One man, in the manner

---

[1] Turnbull, I. 82.
[2] Hearne, 106.
[3] Ib. 265.

above described, had accumulated eight wives, and was on the point of wrestling for a ninth; till one of the former observing "that he had enough already," he desisted, at the same time rewarding the advice with a furious beating.[1] In the choice of these partners, the qualities chiefly considered, are those of bodily strength, and capacity of enduring fatigue. Beauty of person, though not wholly disregarded, is but a subordinate consideration. As to mental qualities, they are not expected or wished to display any, except those of docility and obedience. And even these are very little valued; since blows are always at hand, the copious application of which soon places them completely on a level in this particular.[2]

These tribes display little or nothing of that honesty, which is generally a striking feature in the character of these early societies. Those of Botany Bay, (their historian says,) *might* have practised this virtue in their transactions with each other, but in those they carried on with

---

[1] Hearne, 265. [2] Ib. 90.

Europeans, not a vestige of it appeared. The Northern Indians are distinguished from almost every other savage tribe, by the constant habit of robbing and plundering each other. Wives, furs, goods, and property of all kinds, were laid hold of, and appropriated by the strongest. [1] Neither do I find any mention of that liberal and generous spirit, which we shall find to be so singularly characteristic of other tribes at this early period.

There are none, also, which seem more wholly destitute of religious ideas. The narrowness of their views, and the continual bustle amid which they live, naturally tend to withdraw their attention from future and invisible objects. Among the natives of Botany Bay, no object of worship could be discovered. On being questioned, indeed, as to a future state, they expressed some obscure idea of going, after death, to the clouds, or to some distant country beyond the great water. But they seemed in no degree to view their future lot as connected with their conduct in this life. [2] One of the most intelli-

---

[1] Hearne, 105. [2] Collins, 354-5.

gent among the Northern Indians informed Mr Hearne, that " their only object was to consult their interest, inclinations, and passions, and to pass through life with as much ease and contentment as possible, without any hopes of reward, or painful fear of punishment in the next." But though they have nothing to which the name of religion can be given, yet they are the abject slaves of superstition. A long list is given of the absurd observances of this nature, which were practised by the New Hollanders. They were particularly afraid of apparitions, which they imagined secretly stole upon them, and seized them by the throat. The governor having ordered the body of a criminal, after execution, to be hung in chains, the spectacle served only as an amusement to those for whom it was intended; but was the object of the utmost terror to the natives, who imagined it, like their ghosts, to be armed with supernatural powers. [1]

It seems almost incredible to what perfection the art of juggling is carried among the Northern

[1] Collins, 381-3. 400.

Indians. In the presence of Mr Hearne himself, a naked conjurer was seen to swallow a bayonet, and to produce it again a few minutes after, without its being possible to discover the manner in which this bulky article had been secreted. [1] They are also accustomed to employ against each other charms, which, through the power of imagination, are often possessed of wonderful efficacy. Mr Hearne, having been prevailed upon by the importunity of one of his companions, to give him one against a person with whom he was at variance, learned afterwards, with extreme concern, that the latter had no sooner become informed of the circumstance, than he sickened and died. [2]

Among these tribes, however disorderly, yet in consequence of the thinness of population, some degree of original mildness is still retained. But through causes, which, without more minute information, could not be easily ascertained, this stage is sometimes prolonged beyond its natural period; till subsistence is more abun-

---

[1] Hearne, 193. [2] Ib. 221.

dant, and the numbers considerably greater. In this case, the consequences are dreadful.

An example of this kind seems to be afforded by a tribe which Perouse found at *Port des Francois*, on the north-west coast of America. They are considerably farther advanced, both in numbers and ingenuity, than either of those now mentioned. They live in houses, each of which contains 18 or 20 persons; and Perouse was visited by 700 while he remained in the bay. Their canoes and fishing instruments are skilfully constructed; so that an hour's fishing is sufficient to supply them with food, and to leave them at perfect leisure during the rest of the day. The sources of corruption are thus considerably more copious, than in any of the other tribes; and there is, at the same time, an equal absence of all subordination. Their character accordingly is still more atrocious. Most of their time is spent in gaming, to which they abandon themselves with the utmost fury. They are continually quarrelling, and flying at each other with daggers drawn; they exercise the most inhuman tyranny over their wives and children; and they seem destitute of the first prin-

ciples of common honesty. In short, Perouse, while expressing his conviction, that no society can subsist without some virtue, declares himself wholly unable to conceive, what the virtues can be, by which this society is cemented. [1]

Although that navigator remained in the bay for seven or eight days, and though he saw several tribes mixing with each other, yet there was no appearance of war; nor does he mention any circumstance which would lead us to suppose that it ever takes place. [2] Presuming, indeed, upon the general character of savage life, he imagines that a longer stay might have given him an opportunity of witnessing it; and that, in that case, he might have had occasion to add cannibalism to their other atrocities. But with regard to this last supposition at least, I have no doubt of his being mistaken.

Of all spots upon earth, the *Navigators' Islands* are perhaps the most profusely stored with

---

[1] Voyage round the World, (8vo. London) II. 132-6.

[2] The natives observing the English look very attentively at their daggers, assured them that they were only intended against wild beasts. Ib. II. 85.

the bounties of nature. An exuberant soil supplies every want with spontaneous abundance, imposing on its possessors no toil, but for ornament and pleasure. Their villages, rising gently from the sea, and bosomed in groves of the richest fruit-trees, exhibit the most smiling and peaceful aspect. The French navigators approached these beautiful shores in the full confidence of finding them peopled by a race of innocent and happy beings. But they found nature alone smiling and harmonious; every thing in human form presented the gloomiest contrast.

The first view of the inhabitants dispelled these flattering expectations. The fierceness of their aspect, and the scars with which they were covered all over, indicated a state of perpetual contest, either private or national. The French imprudently ventured on shore in their long boat, and experienced, for some time, a deceitful tranquillity, interrupted only by some quarrelling between individuals. But, in returning to the boat, they, still more imprudently, made presents to a few of the surrounding multitude. Fired with avidity at the sight of these, the rest instantly determined to possess themselves of the

boat and all its contents. A dreadful contest ensued, in which the lieutenant and most of the crew perished, and the boat was, with the utmost difficulty, got off in a very shattered condition.[1]

Perouse at first expresses a doubt, whether the scars which disfigured them, were occasioned by war, or by individual contests. But he afterwards declares himself satisfied, that they could have arisen only from the latter cause. Many circumstances concur to strengthen this opinion. No arms were seen in their possession; in their contest with the French, we find no instruments of systematic warfare; but showers of stones, which they poured upon them with incessant and destructive fury; and enormous clubs, with which they destroyed every unhappy victim who fell into their hands. The wounds of which they bore the marks, appeared evidently to have been given with oars, paddles, and other common instruments, such as chance might supply.[2]

---

[1] Voyage round the World, (8vo. London) Ch. xxiv.
[2] Ibid. III. 73. 111.

The circumstances of these islanders, seem sufficient to account for this singularly atrocious character. The exuberance of the soil at once multiplies numbers, and exempts them from the necessity of labour. Perouse supposes Maouna to be as well peopled as the Society Islands; which seems confirmed by the multitudes that flocked to the shore at a few hours warning. And the coercion to which they are subject, is little or none. A few chiefs indeed were seen belabouring the rest with sticks; but this appeared to be the whole extent of their power. Never were sovereigns worse obeyed; never was there such a scene of anarchy, and insubordination.[1] They seem, in short, to form the extreme case in this form of society; and exhibit the clearest evidence of the horrors that would ensue, from the progressive principles continuing to operate without any controul.

[1] Perouse, III. 117.

CHAP. II.

SMALL FREE NATIONS.

As we proceed southwards from the shores of Hudson's Bay to the lakes of Canada, we find a milder climate, woods better stocked with game, and lakes abounding in fish. A certain rude species of agriculture is even understood and practised; and the country is thus rendered capable of supporting a considerably greater population. The inhabitants dwell in towns, which generally contain several hundreds, sometimes two or three thousand. The Caribs and Brazilians in South America, though unacquainted with agriculture, yet, from the superior fertility of the climate, are even more numerous. Again, the inhabitants, even of the least cultivated part of New Zealand, though living in a cli-

mate similar to that of Botany Bay, have made a much greater progress in the useful arts. Their canoes are large and well constructed; their fishery is conducted with skill; and they have acquired the art of preserving its produce against a season of scarcity. Hence we find in all these nations an increase of numbers, which not only produces an additional energy and ferocity, but is accompanied by other circumstances, inducing a complete change in their moral aspect.

There is a principle deeply implanted in the nature of man, and which, in his rude state, operates with peculiar energy. This is the tendency to attach himself strongly to the family, tribe, or little community, of which circumstances have led him to form a part. So strongly does this tendency operate on the mind of the savage, that the connection thus formed becomes the most prominent part of the idea which is formed of him, both by himself, and by others. Has an injury been sustained by any of his tribe? he burns for vengeance, as if himself had been the sufferer. Again, has he been injured by one of a different society? Without distinction, he flies to retaliate on the first of its

members with whom he can meet, every one of whom becomes identified, in his eyes, with the individual who has wronged him.[1] And however stupid and barbarous this propensity may appear in the eyes of a more civilized age, it answers, at the time, a valuable purpose. It forms the first rude cement of political society. By its means, men, still rude and impatient of controul, are enabled to form themselves into a strict national union, without relinquishing any portion of their natural liberty.

As numbers increase, and contests, in consequence, become more frequent and furious, the advantages of acting in a body, both for committing, and for repelling injuries, are more and more felt. Similarity of local situation, of family descent, or of habits and mode of life, connects together a number of individuals for this purpose. The occurrence of common injuries, common dangers, and common enterprises, frequent in this turbulent state of society,

[1] Some curious illustrations of this propensity, will be found in Millar's Essay on English Government.

draw closer and closer the ties of this union. Small nations are formed.

Of these the leading characteristic is, *The most intense and unbounded ferocity towards their enemies; accompanied with a great degree of union and attachment between each other.*

The purest and most completely formed examples of this state seem to be afforded by the Iroquois, or Five Nations of Canada, and by the Caribs and Brazilians in South America. The following estimate of its general character will therefore be made with a peculiar reference to them; though without rejecting such illustration of particular customs, as other tribes may afford. I shall then take a cursory view of similar tribes in other parts of the world, and particularly of those which still partake somewhat of the character of the former stage.

The division into nations being now completely formed, War ensues, and forms the grand feature in this stage of society. A late traveller mentions an Indian woman, who, on being delivered of a son, presented it to him, saying, "Here, Englishman, is a young warrior." [1] As

[1] Long, Travels of an Interpreter in North America, 57.

among us, one man is a husbandman, and another a mechanic; in the same degree, among the Indians, every man is a warrior. This part of his character, in their eyes, absorbs every other. The mothers, by relating to their children the great actions and sufferings of their ancestors, nourish in their breasts the passion of war, and of deadly hatred against the enemies of their tribe. Their supreme Deity, the Great Spirit, the Master of Life, is the God also of War. [1]

These wars are not prompted by any ambition to extend their territory; nor, before the arrival of the Europeans at least, was plunder their object. Revenge wrought to its highest pitch, relentless and unbounded, forms the great avowed motive, the never-failing source of endless hostility. [2] The moment a man has fallen by a foreign hand, the whole tribe to which he belongs is in arms. His bones lie unburied, his blood cries aloud, and cannot be appeased but by the utter misery and destruction, not of the

---

[1] Lafitau, Mœurs des Sauvages, I. 205-6.

[2] Charlevoix, Hist. de la Nouvelle France, V. 370-2. Purchas, IV. 1333.

murderer only, but of all connected with him by name or nation. [1] And every one who is slain in their deadly combats, becomes another head to avenge a new ground of lengthened warfare. Hence the endless duration of their wars, which cease not till one of the contending tribes is either exterminated, or can appease the conqueror by the most abject submission. [2] Carver, on penetrating into the interior of Canada, found a war going on which had raged for forty years without intermission. [3] Among some of the South American tribes, war is perpetual and incessant; neither peace nor truce was ever heard of. [4]

The fierceness and love of war which reign in this stage of society, necessarily suppose a high degree of courage. But this courage, with

---

[1] Brickell's Hist. of North Carolina (Dublin, 1736) 331-2. Lafitau, II. 297.

[2] The Iroquois forced a number of nations whom they had subdued, to put on petticoats in sign of subjection, (Charlevoix.) The Eriez, a once powerful people, have left no trace of their existence, besides the great lake which bears their name, Ib. II. 62.

[3] Travels into the interior of North America, p. 63.

[4] Lafitau, II. 292.

the glory which attends its exertion, is very different from that which is valued among us, and which we have even found prevailing at an earlier period. It has reference, not to the display of personal prowess, but solely to the quantity of the execution done.[1] The destruction of his country's enemies, combined with his own preservation, forms, to every individual, the only desirable object. Exposure to danger, which is elsewhere the standard of courage, is here strictly prohibited; to die in battle is disgraceful and miserable. When under the necessity of engaging in the open field, they fight like lions; but this is an extremity which they carefully shun. All their wars are carried on by surprise, stratagem, and ambuscade.[2]

The source of these peculiar ideas may be easily traced. In a small community, surrounded by continual dangers from without, the public interest is brought home, in the most pressing

---

[1] Long, 29.

[2] Charlevoix, VI. 34. 35. 134. Purchas, IV. 1335. Rogers' History of North America, (London, 1765) 229.

manner, to the breast of every individual; and, independently of the strength of the associating principle, his own interest is connected with it in the closest manner. It is upon public concerns, therefore, that his attention is exclusively fixed. He fights to gratify, not his own passions, but only those of his tribe. The merit of his actions is estimated solely by their tendency to secure its safety, or to satiate its revenge. And as the whole number composing these tribes is exceedingly small, the loss of every single warrior forms a sensible diminution of that national strength, which was to be applied to these purposes. To risk his own life, therefore, by an ostentatious display of valour, would be a sort of treason against his country, would be preferring his own glory to its welfare.

When one nation has determined to make war with another, they announce it by no public declaration, and studiously avoid every intimation of their design. As soon as they have entered an enemy's country, no fires are kindled, all noise is prohibited, and provision having been previously made of the means of subsist-

ence, even their usual occupation of hunting is discontinued. The band moves through the forests in deep and watchful silence. The sagacity with which they trace out an enemy, is said to be almost incredible. The lightest print of human footsteps, imperceptible to an European eye, is sufficient to inform them, not only of men having passed, but of their number, and the nation to which they belong. They can trace them, like greyhounds, even by the scent. They steer their canoes over immense lakes, and even seas, without ever deviating from the direct line which leads to the point of destination.[1] Their grand aim is to surprise a camp, or fortified village, of the enemy. And this they often accomplish; since, in spite of multiplied experience, none of these nations have adopted the obvious precaution of stationing sentries to guard the encampment. When, therefore, they have attained their object, and have reached the hostile camp, at the approach of night, all the party lay themselves flat on the ground, at a small distance from it. In this posture they continue the whole

[1] Charlevoix, V. 352.

night without moving or speaking. A little before sunrise, however, when the Indians are buried in the deepest slumber, they begin to creep towards them, silently and slowly, that not the least sound may escape. Then, all being ripe for action, the chief gives the war-cry; and the whole party spring up. The air resounds with hideous and inhuman yells, expressive of the preternatural fury with which they are agitated. After a general discharge of fire-arms, they instantly rush in upon them with the tomahawk. Nothing, it is said, which we can witness or conceive, can equal the horrors of an Indian camp taken by storm. Men, women, and children, are involved in promiscuous slaughter. One man grasps the head of him he has slain, and strips off the scalp, to bear as a trophy of his victory. Another tears out the heart of his enemy, or drinks his blood, as it flows warm from the fatal wound. A close circle surrounds the devoted victims, who seek, in vain, to escape the horrors of Indian vengeance.[1]

---

[1] Carver, 310—12. Charlevoix, II. 12, 23.; V. 353.

For the few who survive this scene of destruction, a more terrible fate is reserved. To men, animated by this unrelenting vengeance, death is not enough. This last act is soon over, and then the victim is insensible, and seems to have escaped out of their hands. They wish to make him, before dying, endure something worse than death; to keep him suffering under their eye; to procure, for their revenge, a lengthened and high-wrought gratification. The first mode of prolonging this enjoyment, is by exercising indignities on the lifeless body: this is practised by the inhabitants of part of Terra del Fuego.[1] But the North American tribes have framed an elaborate system of torture, with the view of inflicting on their victim the utmost agony of which human nature is susceptible. In this cruelty, nothing is more remarkable than the horrible deliberation with which it is exercised. It is not in the heat of battle, or the first intoxication of victory. A long course of ceremonies must be previously performed. The

[1] Voyages aux Indes, I. 568.

warrior carries home his prisoners, and places them at the disposal of the supreme council of the nation. By so doing, he becomes entitled to the warmest gratitude from them, and still more from the female part of the society, whose most earnest petition to those who set out on an expedition, is to bring them home captives to torture. The villages, however, through which the prisoners pass, are not altogether excluded from this high gratification. They are allowed to inflict as much bodily pain, as is compatible with the safety of life and limb. To maim a captive, would be doing a serious injury to the warrior, whose property he is supposed to be, and whose highest pride is to present him to the council in a sound and entire state.[1] After having done so, his connection with him ceases; the sole disposal of this species of booty rests with the national council. The female heads of families then prefer their claims; which are, a husband, a father, or a brother, who has fallen in battle, and whose blood is yet unappeased.[2]

---

[1] Charlevoix, V. 359-60. Lafitau, II. 270.

[2] Charlevoix, V. 360.

A distribution being made upon this principle, the matron, to whom each captive is assigned, becomes the absolute mistress of his destiny. She may, and generally does, give him up to be tortured; but if there be any blank to be filled up in her family, and if this motive of prudence prevail over her fiercer passions, she then takes off his chains, and sends him to be washed in the nearest river; after which, he becomes a member of the family, or tribe, and is, in every respect, on a footing with the rest. Even when her determination is more fatal, she does not proceed at once to the work of death. She allows him a short space of life; and, during that period, practises a singular refinement of cruelty. By the influence of the most powerful contrasts, she studies to augment the horrors of his approaching destiny. She lavishes on him every means of enjoyment; she treats him with studied kindness; she calls him father, brother, or son, according to the name of the relation, whose death she is to revenge on him. In some tribes (the practice is still more general in South America) he receives a wife, who lives with him for this short space, and treats him with the utmost

tenderness. But the destined day at length arrives. Then, before abandoning him to the torture, she invokes the shade of him whose blood has long been crying for vengeance:—"Approach, and be appeased: here is your victim. His flesh shall be torn from the bones. He shall expire, by my hands, in the most frightful tortures. Complain no longer; you shall now be satisfied."[1] Then follows that dreadful scene, so often described, when every extreme of ferocity is exhausted on the unhappy sufferer; while he tranquilly raises his song of death, boasting his own great actions, insulting and defying his tormentors. Thus he continues, often for many successive days, singing amid tortures inexpressible. Not a sigh, not a groan, escapes him; even his countenance remains unchanged. The highest ambition of his tormentors is to wrest from him some symptom of sensibility. His death is a poor revenge, unless they can also deprive him of his honour, which is all centered in the maintenance of the most profound insen-

[1] Charlevoix, V. 364.

sibility. They watch for these symptoms with the most eager curiosity; and, as soon as they appear in the slightest degree, (for on this subject their penetration is infinite,) shouts of inhuman triumph proclaim their success.[1]

The practice of studied torture seems almost peculiar to North America. Among most other tribes in this stage of society, revenge is gratified by a crime still more revolting to nature. Prisoners are not tortured, but they are devoured; and man, losing every thing of humanity but the form, feeds with delight on the slaughtered corse of his fellow-man. I am disposed to suspect, that this enormity is general among all nations during a certain period of their annals. It seems to be prior to the North American practice, prompted by the same unbounded ferocity, operating in a ruder and less artificial form. From some expressions, which are still used by these tribes, there seems reason to think, that it may once have prevailed among them, and that their torture has only been a gradual refinement up-

[1] Charlevoix, V. 66. Long, 63—70-1.

on it. It is practised through the greater part of South America; it has evidently been universal over the South Sea islands, since even in those where it is most completely eradicated, ceremonies are still practised, which clearly indicate its former prevalence. The writers of antiquity lived among nations whose civilization had long been sufficient to banish this practice, and who maintained little intercourse with those ruder tribes among whom it might still have been found. We are informed, however, that it was practised among the more savage Scythian tribes, and was not altogether obliterated even among the more polished Massagetes; that it was ascribed to the Scots, Irish, perhaps even to the Britons; that it was practised by the early inhabitants of Greece. The tradition of its former existence in Sicily, probably gave rise to the fable concerning the savage feasts of the Cyclops. All these concurring testimonies seem sufficient to prove, that cannibalism, if not universal, was at least very widely diffused.

This monstrous practice has been supposed to arise chiefly from that scantiness and precariousness of subsistence, which attends the imperfec-

tion of all the useful arts. But though it might be improper altogether to exclude this cause, I see no ground to consider it as the leading one. The resource is evidently so limited in its very nature, that, without causing the absolute extermination of the species, it never can form any sensible addition to the means of subsistence. In fact, almost all the accounts which I have met with of its prevalence among any nation, are accompanied with the observation, that other food is in great abundance.[1] In those earlier stages, which are pressed by the most extreme and desperate want, it is either unknown, or held in abhorrence. The Greenlander, so dependant on the changing elements, the wretched and starving Pesheray, the naked and savage inhabitant of New Holland, do not feed on human flesh. Nor does it ever appear to happen, that a man, for this dreadful purpose, murders another belonging to his own society; and even when slain by quarrel or accident, the lifeless form remains inviolate. Hearne expressly ac-

[1] Cooke's Second Voyage, I. 60. Third Voy. I. 374. Forster's Observations in a Voyage round the World, 325, &c.

quits of this brutality the Indians among whom he travelled; observing, that it takes place only in those desperate circumstances which would authorise it, even in an European society.[1]— The natives of Botany Bay, however savage in their general intercourse, never proceed to this extremity. In talking of a stranger, whose qualifications, in other respects, they highly esteemed, they are said to have mentioned, with looks of horror, that he was a cannibal.[2]

It is not, therefore, till the complete separation into nations, and its consequence, war, that this practice begins to prevail. Even then we may suppose want of food to be the ruling motive, though the deadly hostility with which the members of different communities regard each other, may make them no longer shrink from this direful mode of gratifying their hunger. It would appear, however, that they consider it chiefly as an expression of the direst ferocity, as the means of inflicting on their victim the most abhorred of all possible fates. To devour the flesh of their enemy, to drink his blood, appears to them the

[1] See also Mackenzie, Hist. of Fur Trade, 129.

[2] Collins, 285.

most wished-for consummation of their rooted vengeance.[1]

Among some of the South American tribes, this treatment of the captive is ingeniously converted into a species of mental torture, by the accumulation of every horror that can arise from the anticipation of his destiny. As soon as he is brought home, preparations begin for the feast which is to celebrate his doom. The utensils that are to be employed in it are made new for the express purpose; the fatal club is shaped and painted; an immense quantity of chica, their favourite liquor, is prepared. All these processes are performed in his presence, and are studiously brought under his eye. He is well aware for what they are destined: but they apparently make no impression on him; he views them as things in which he has not the remotest concern. His honour consists in manifesting the most profound indifference to his approaching fate. At length the feast begins; he is admitted to it; he is the gay-

[1] *Non urgente quidem fame, sed odiis acerbissimis invicem flagrantibus se mutuo devorant.—Fit ex mero naturali odio.* Stadius apud De Bry, America, I. 119.

est of the company, the loudest in boasting his own great actions, particularly those performed against the nation by whose warriors he is surrounded. After a few days of feasting and intoxication, the appointed day arrives. Then, early in the morning, he is placed on a scaffold, in the view of the whole multitude, and a person holds up before him, for several successive hours, the instrument by which he is to be slain. This person is not the executioner; that office is solicited by their bravest warriors, and considered as one of the highest national honours. In due time, however, he too steps forth, attired in his most splendid war-dress, and his face barbarously painted. Then, taking the club from him who holds it, he advances to the captive, saying, "Here am I, that have killed many of thy nation, and will kill thee."—To which he proudly answers; "You do well: I have slain multitudes of your countrymen. I have devoured them. You do well; but my death will be revenged." The executioner then strikes the fatal blow; the victim falls; and the multitudes flock with eagerness to share the inhuman repast.[1]

[1] Purchas, IV. 1217. Lafitau, II. 295—303. De Bry. I. 123—7.

Although revenge seems thus to have been the original motive of this atrocity; though this food seems rarely resorted to from the absolute want of any other; yet it seems afterwards to become the object of a horrible preference in point of taste. What foundation there may be for this preference, no one, I suppose, will feel any curiosity to enquire. Probably it has been greatly heightened from being associated with the idea of that prowess and victory, by which this horrible repast has been preceded. The tribes, however, among whom it is practised, are often represented as boasting of its superiority to other food.[1] A chief of Nootka Sound had carefully denied his attachment to it, understanding that it would be offensive to his English visitors. But, happening to receive a wound in the leg, the view of the blood proved too strong a temptation to him; and, applying his mouth, he sucked it up, with exclamations of delight.[2] Some French navigators having landed on New Cale-

[1] Purchas, IV. 1230.

[2] Meares's Voyage to Nootka Sound, (8vo. 1791,) II. 49.

donia, were surprised to see the natives grasping their legs and thighs, and viewing their plumpness and firmness with an eager admiration, for which they could not account; till, receiving a description of their cannibal feasts, they learned that these were the parts considered by them as most delicious.[1]

A still more singular modification is that which takes place among some nations, who, animated by a sentiment of filial piety, consider their own bodies as the most suitable place in which the remains of their parents can be deposited. This idea is mentioned by Lafitau to prevail among several of the South American tribes. A nation of ancient India is said to have been so strongly impressed with this obligation, that upon being urged by Darius to exchange their practice for that of the Greeks, they expressed the utmost horror at the very mention of such a proposal.[2] The Massagetes too are represented, in case of great old age, as even hastening the death

[1] Labillardiere. II. 225.
[2] Herodotus, IV. 38.

of their parents; after which they hold a solemn feast, and eat them up, with every mark of the profoundest respect.[1]

We have already observed, that the glory of the warrior does not at all consist in the display of personal prowess, or in exposure to danger; but is regulated altogether by the amount of the execution done. The number of enemies whom he has slain, forms the sole boast of the savage chieftain.[2] His highest title of honour is that of *Great Mankiller.*[3] In those rude drawings on the barks of trees, by which they sometimes attempt to commemorate their exploits, the scene does not represent the hour of contest or danger; it paints the state of the field *after* the battle, when some of their enemies are lying dead, others are wounded, and others remain prisoners in their hands.[4] In the same spirit, they compose those trophies, which serve at once as a proof and a memorial of their valour. The most obvious of these is formed by cutting off the head of the vanquished enemy; these the Brazilians pile up in a corner of their

[1] Herodotus, I. 215.
[2] De Bry, I. 116. Long. 29. Mela. II. 1.
[3] Lettres edifiantes, VIII. let. 1. [4] Charlevoix, VI. 159.

huts, and watch them carefully as their choicest treasure. The ancient Scythians were accustomed to present them to their king or chieftain, as forming at once the most acceptable present to him, and the clearest evidence of their own merit.[1] The Gauls are said to have rode about with them, hanging by their horses' heads.[2] As their trophy, however, must have proved both cumbersome and perishable, the North Americans have, as is well known, abridged the process, by tearing off merely the scalps, which can be treasured up in the greatest numbers, and made to last for any length of time. The same custom, to a certain extent, prevailed among the Scythians.[3] A chief, in one of the South Sea Islands, wore a girdle composed of the teeth of the enemies whom he had slain in battle;[4] another had a spitting box inlaid with them. A navigator having landed on an unknown island in the South Sea, and entered a cottage which had been left by its inhabitants, found, hanging by the fire, a string of human hands. In all these examples, besides the fero-

[1] Herodotus, IV. 66.
[2] Strabo, IV. 136.
[3] Herodotus, IV. 64.
[4] Hawkesworth, I. 113.

city of the savage character, we see a decided reference to the effects resulting from their valour, rather than to that valour itself, or to the manner in which it was displayed.

There are tribes, among whom a degree of this merit is found essential to the maintenance of a man's station in society. The Brazilians account it unlawful for any one to take a wife, till he has first killed and eaten an enemy. Among the ancient Scythians, in like manner, a splendid feast was annually prepared for all such as had killed their man; whence every one, who had not attained to that savage honour, was ignominiously excluded. [1]

Next in glory to this exercise of fierceness, is the corresponding quality of fortitude under suffering. This is the true point of savage honour; a failure in which brands them with eternal infamy. Nor is it their own character alone which is at stake: they must beware, least by the slightest symptom of sensibility, they stain the honour of their tribe, and afford a triumph to its enemies. Hence an immoveable

---

[1] Purchas, IV. 1290. Herodotus, IV. 66.

tranquillity amid their agonies; hence insults heaped on the surrounding torturers; hence that lofty contempt of suffering and death, which it is their highest ambition to display. As a party of Indians were evacuating one of their forts, on the approach of the French and some natives in alliance with them, an old chief formed the resolution of remaining, that he might raise the character of his tribe in the eyes of these strangers, by shewing them how its members could *suffer*. [1]

The cultivation of this quality must of course have a peculiar reference to that dreadful fate which awaits the captive taken in war. The whole of his preceding life is, as it were, a preparation for this awful close to which it is liable. As soon as his lips are able to articulate, he learns his death song. He enures himself early to every form of suffering, he steels his heart against every fear. [2]

Having thus viewed the terrible and disastrous aspect which these societies, when considered externally, assume, it is now time to take a view

---

[1] Colden. [2] Charlevoix, VI. 9, 10.

of their internal character. And here, indeed, a wonderful contrast presents itself. According to the report of the best informed travellers, and of those who resided longest among these tribes, their character approaches to that exhibited by the happiest forms of primitive society. They are attached to each other by the strongest bonds of affection. Coarse and abusive language is never to be heard among them; on the contrary, they treat each other with an attention, politeness, and respect, which is quite unknown among the lower orders in a civilized country. Their quarrels are rare, and of short duration; travellers mention with admiration the profound peace which reigns in their villages. One, who resided for a year among a horde of Brazilian cannibals, declares, that during the whole of that time, he was witness only to two quarrels; and even these were slight, and easily appeased. They relieve the wants of each other with a generosity which knows no bounds. In short, Charlevoix does not hesitate to declare, that nothing would be wanting to the excellence of their character, if the same rule were observed by nations in their intercourse with each other,

that is observed between individuals of the same nation. [1]

The distinction which this circumstance forms between the present and the former stage, becomes still more remarkable, when we consider that the sources of corruption have received a great augmentation. Their numbers are much more considerable; and it is this circumstance chiefly which has produced their division into nations. Their assemblages, too, for the purpose of warfare, are more numerous and frequent; while the pressure of continual danger renders it eligible to collect themselves into pretty considerable villages. Nor is there any coercive principle established to counteract these sources of disorder. The most perfect independence is considered by every Indian as his birthright, which nothing can alienate. [2] They laugh contemptuously at the obedience which

[1] Charlevoix, V. 391. VI. 11, 12. Lafitau, I. 105-6. 485. De Bry, America, I. 112. Purchas, IV. 1342. Davies's Hist. of Caribby Islands, 269. (They are associated, as it were, in one common interest; they are of all people the most loving one to another, Ib.) Bartram's Travels in North America, (2d edit.) 488.

[2] Rogers, 233. Lettres edifiantes, IV. 356.

they see other nations pay to chiefs or kings; while they are free, and accountable for their actions to none.[1] They consider even the children as entitled to the full enjoyment of this natural liberty. They dread, least, by chastisement, they should break that spirit of fierce independence, which may one day be the bulwark of national safety. They never check or punish them, therefore, but leave them, from their earliest years, entire masters of their own actions.[2] They have chiefs, indeed, chosen on account of that rude kind of merit which is valued in such a society; and to whom they pay a certain measure of respect in peace, and deference in war. But unless on the field of battle, these chiefs possess not the shadow of power. There is no police, no form of justice, no means of punishing crimes, provided by the public. In cases of robbery or murder, the injured person, or his friends, must seek redress as they best can; the nation looks on wholly unconcerned.[3] It is easy to conceive the dread-

---

[1] Long. 30. [2] Lafitau, I. 602–3.
[3] De Bry, America. I. 110. Ferguson on Civil Society.

ful consequences which would ensue from such a state of things, were it to exist in an European society.

What then is the circumstance which checks that propensity to quarrelling and private contests, to which an unbridled multitude is usually so prone? This seems to be no other than the violence of that hostility with which these tribes habitually regard each other. The fiercer their hatred, the more constant and deadly their wars, the more perfect is always this internal union. Two causes seem to concur in producing this remarkable effect.

1. The hostile passions, far from being softened, have become still fiercer; but their direction is changed. All the powers of the soul are absorbed in that unbounded hatred, which inflames them against the enemies of their tribe. The malignant principles being thus drained off, as it were, what remains behind is mild and harmless. The violence of their passions in this direction, leaves, for their intercourse with each other, only that moderate degree of activity which is so favourable to simplicity and goodness of character. Every thing tends to draw

closer the ties which attach the savage to the members of his own community. They are governed by the same interests, and animated by the same passions. They are his companions in danger, his aid in difficulty, the witnesses and the sharers of his glory. The augmentation, too, of their small numbers is so essential to national defence, that the life of every individual becomes an important object to the rest of the society; hence their horror for duelling. [1]

The change thus effected is, on the whole, favourable. The sum of ferocity, indeed, seems not in the least diminished; nay, from the increase in the exciting causes, and from its acting in a more concentrated form, the symptoms become more striking and terrible. Still it is exercised at intervals only, and upon remote objects. It is not, as formerly, the disturber of every day, and of every hour. Reserving itself for great occasions, it leaves the usual current of life mild and tranquil. By this change, therefore, as by a salutary process of nature, the malady which was preying on

[1] Lafitau, II. 297.

the vitals of the social system, is thrown out upon the extremities. [1]

2. Though there be no internal coercion, yet, we had formerly occasion to observe, that nearly the same effect may be produced by external fear; and this is carried to the utmost possible height. The common danger, the incessant dread of an unrelenting and exterminating enemy, warns them continually of the necessity of union among themselves. A fate, which nature shudders to think of, hangs continually over

---

[1] This difference of character is strikingly illustrated by a very curious passage of Hearne, where we discern the two stages, as it were, in the very moment of transition. His companions (whose general character we have seen in the last Chapter) suddenly conceived the design of surprising and murdering a party of Esquimaux; upon which they instantly, and for a time, exhibited all the symptoms of the succeeding stage. "It is, perhaps, worth remarking," says he, "that my crew, though an undisciplined rabble, and by no means enured to war, acted on this horrid occasion with the utmost uniformity of sentiment. There was not among them the least altercation, or separate opinion; all were united in the general cause. Never was reciprocity of interest more generally regarded among a number of people, than it was on the present occasion by my crew; for not one of them was a moment in want of any thing that another could spare; and if ever the spirit of disinterested friendship expanded the heart of a northern Indian, it was here exhibited in the most extensive meaning of the word."

their head. A hostility so deadly, directed alike against a whole society, must bind them together by the strongest possible tie.

There are still other circumstances in the political constitution of these tribes, which tend to produce a character, not only different, but in many respects opposite, to that which prevails in the earlier forms of savage life. There the individual was wholly swayed by private interests and passions; which being continually jostled and thwarted by those of the other members of the society, kept his mind in a state of constant irritation. These passions, however, were all trifling; nor was any one qualified to gain so high an ascendency, as to extinguish the rest. But here his attention is entirely occupied with interests of the most deep and serious importance. The glory of his tribe, the prosperity of its members, the destruction of its enemies; these are the objects with which his whole soul is habitually engrossed. For conducting their great common operations, concert and deliberation are absolutely necessary; and for these purposes, regular assemblies must be held. As soon as the young Indian reaches the age of twelve, he

is admitted to the public councils of his nation; he becomes a statesman and a warrior; and is expected to assume a dignity of deportment, suited to those high characters.[1] In particular, he must be exempted from the sway of trifling and ephemeral passions; he must display an unvarying tranquillity, a superiority to all the ordinary feelings and occurrences of life.

Besides the absence of quarrelling, there are other good qualities which the Indians display, to an extraordinary degree, in their domestic intercourse. Among these, one of the most remarkable is their politeness. Their manners form a complete contrast with the savageness of their aspect. Their whole conversation is regulated by the most studious attention to say nothing which can displease those to whom it is addressed. Scolding, which among us forms so large a share of the conversation of the lower orders, to whom, indeed, it is not *wholly* confined, is altogether foreign to their manners. Every thing is conducted with the strictest attention to

---

[1] Charlevoix, V. 210. 401.

decorum.[1] Whoever speaks, is respectfully listened to; no interruption, no symptoms of impatience. It is a rule with them, never to contradict what is said by another; nay, whatever it may be, they even think it incumbent on them to express belief and approbation. This the missionaries often found to their cost. After having, at great length, explained to them the duties of Christianity, and received the most ample assurances of conviction, the Indian, whom they were on the eve of numbering among their converts, began, very composedly, to entertain them with the history of his own superstitions. The missionary, then, in attempting to prove the folly of these, was bitterly reproached with his want of courtesy; and his conduct was contrasted with that of the Indian, who had expressed implicit belief in things that appeared to him the most strange and incredible.[2]

Another quality, still more estimable, is their unbounded generosity with regard to the necessaries of life. This is not a virtue which we

---

[1] Adair, History of North America Indians, 429.

[2] Charlevoix, I. 292-3. Lafitau, I. 479.

should, at first sight, expect to meet with in such circumstances. Considering the extreme difficulty and precariousness of subsistence, we might suppose every individual to be sufficiently engrossed by the supply of his own wants, and little inclined to attend to, or relieve those of others. Yet there is no virtue which is more widely diffused over savage life, or which appears more conspicuous in the stage we are now considering. Independently of the mutual good will with which they are animated, these dispositions are much promoted by the absence of wealth, and of all desire of it. The low state of the arts leaves no temptation to accumulate, no means of consuming any large portion of the fruits of the earth in selfish gratification. Nor are there any distinctions of rank to obliterate the strong sense which they entertain of the natural equality of man. Hence, it is a maxim with them, that all things ought to be common among men; and they act almost as if it really were so. No Indian, however threatened himself with approaching want, if he meets another in circumstances still more necessitous, hesitates to share with him his last morsel. *Cabins*, or moving

villages, which meet in the course of their peregrinations, treat each other with the same boundless liberality.[1] Even the traveller, who has given the most unfavourable view of the Indian character, acknowledges, that, in this respect, they display virtues which do honour to human nature; and that their acts of kindness and generosity cannot be exceeded.[2] Nor are these acts confined within the limits of their own tribe; they extend equally to their neighbours, and indeed to every human being, with the single exception of those with whom they are at war. I think it not improbable, that the complaints which are sometimes made by Europeans of Indian ingratitude, may arise from the extreme sense which they entertain of this obligation. A late traveller mentions, that the Indians, in the neighbourhood of one of our forts, being in want of provisions, received a daily distribution of corn from the English. They came regularly, and received their quota, but without any expression of thankfulness, or seeming to consider them-

[1] Lafitau, II. 90.

[2] Long, 119.

selves as lying under the slightest obligation. They conceived it as following of course, that if the English had food, and they wanted it, a supply should be given them. An action which, with Europeans, implies such a stretch of benevolence, was to them only the first and simplest duty of humanity.[1]

Connected with this virtue, is that of hospitality, which is exercised in a manner equally liberal and unbounded. This, too, is one which very generally prevails in rude and thinly inhabited countries. By those who have been inclined to depreciate its merit, it has been represented as entirely owing, on one hand, to the abundance of provision; and, on the other, to the uneasiness felt from the want of social intercourse. Now, I am disposed to think, that these allegations are, in almost every instance, carried too far; and that, in this simple hospitality, there is always a large portion of disinterested benevolence. But, in the present instance, these unfavourable suppositions seem completely inappli-

[1] Weld's Travels in North America.

cable; since, in the first place, the means of subsistence, far from being abundant, are in the highest degree precarious; and, in the second place, these are the men of all others who have least relish for the pleasures of conversation. Accordingly, Europeans, who had no knowledge of their language, have met with the same friendly reception; and, though terrified at first with the uncouth gestures and behaviour of their hosts, have soon found them to be meant only as symptoms of kindness and welcome. Whenever a stranger enters, the first thing they do is to set down food; and it is a rule, that, till he has completely refreshed himself, no questions shall be put to him.[1]

That external hostility to which they are exposed, tends also to draw closer the ties of friendship. It is commonly observed, that the Indian is the worst enemy, but the best friend, in the world. Friendship, with them, is not a mere transient connection, formed by caprice, or the desire of amusement; but a bond which it would be infa-

[1] Lafitau, II. 88. 90, 91. Bartram, 489.

mous to violate; an indissoluble union of their fates. The grand duty which it imposes, is that of affording mutual assistance in those perilous circumstances to which they are so often reduced. This sentiment, to which they are entirely devoted, wears somewhat of a sacred character, like that which love assumed in the ages of romance. They invoke each other, though distant, in the hour of danger. Even after death, they hope to meet again, and to aid each other beyond the tomb. In some nations of South America, friends are called *the perfect allies*; all goods are common between them; and their connection is conceived to be so intimate, as to render it unlawful to marry into each others family. The state, sensible of the public advantage derived from them, encourage and foster these friendships. Friends are called the sinews of the Five Nations.[1]

The conduct which we have now delineated is, among civilized nations, supposed to indicate, not only good dispositions, but a peculiar warmth

[1] Lafitau, I. 603-8. Rogers, 194. Charlevoix, VI.

and sensibility of character. If, however, these sentiments exist at all in the breast of the Indian, no symptoms of them are allowed to appear. Even on occasions, when feeling is with us considered as most manly and honourable, he suppresses it with care, and wraps himself up in stern insensibility. If told that his son has performed a gallant action, he coldly replies, "Very well." If told of his death, he replies, "No matter." When his wife comes to meet him, on his return from an expedition, in which, perhaps, several of their children have fallen, he takes no notice, never speaks or looks at her, but silently stalks in and seats himself. Then, indeed, after sitting a few hours, he may perhaps mention the news, but carelessly, as a matter of perfect indifference.[1] In short, his highest ambition is to preserve, on every occasion, a profound and unvarying tranquillity. Yet we cannot hence infer, that he is destitute of all sensibility, more than, from his constancy under suffering, we can infer that he wants the sense of bodily pain. It

---

[1] Carver, 238-40.

cannot certainly be doubted, that he experiences the feeling of hunger; yet this is concealed as carefully as any other. Even though he has remained several days without food, on coming to a place where it may be had, he never asks for it, but if his wants be not anticipated, retires, without complaining; he will, on no account, confess he is hungry. To do so, would be unworthy of a man; it would be acting like an old woman.[1] This outward apathy seems, therefore, to form part of that standard of dignity which they attach to the character of the warrior and the hero, who must be superior to the common wants and feelings of nature. We may, doubtless, add the ambition of displaying that fortitude, which is valued by them so much above every other quality; and which ought, they conceive, to include mental as well as bodily suffering. The women, who are not subjected to these stern laws of decorum, display the utmost affection for their family and children. It is by these sentiments, indeed, that they are urged to their most dreadful acts of ferocity,

[1] Carver, 239.

which are all prompted by the desire of avenging those lost relations, whose memory they cherish with the fondest regret. Even the men, when warmed with liquor, which is supposed to dispense with these strict rules of propriety, give full vent to their natural sensibility. A late traveller mentions an Indian tribe, who, on losing one of their companions, sent him an earnest petition for a little rum, that they might be allowed to weep for their departed friend.[1]

Among their virtues, it would appear, that we may also number purity in the intercourse of the sexes.[2] This has been observed to take place in a degree so remarkable, as has led several ingenious writers to suspect some deficiency of bodily frame, peculiar to the inhabitants of the New World. It is needless to enter into any particular examination of an hypothesis, which is now, I believe, pretty generally given up. The observation, in fact, is very far from applying universally to America, but was suggested by that part of it which contained nations in the

---

[1] Mackenzie, Travels, 150.

[2] Purchas, IV. 1291. Davies's Caribby Islands, 270.

stage we are now treating of, particularly by the North American tribes.

A more plausible reason has been derived from those hardships and privations incident to the savage state, which, it is supposed, may be sufficient to extinguish every voluptuous propensity. Yet we shall soon see, that in nations, very little better furnished with the conveniences of life, dissoluteness of manners rises to the utmost possible height. This part, too, of their conduct, appears to me to be rather inspired by their high sense of the dignity of human nature, and by the disgrace which they attach to every kind of effeminate indulgence. And with this sentiment is doubtless combined the pride which they feel in subduing even their strongest propensities. Such an opinion seems confirmed by the observation, that this virtue, contrary to what obtains in every other society, is most conspicuous in the men, who are far from oppressing themselves by any extraordinary degree of labour, but whose character is replete with dignity and pride; and less in that of the other sex, who are subjected to toil the most severe and incessant.

This haughty indifference is said to be mani-

fested even in the formation of the most legitimate connections. The first proposal of marriage for the young Indian, is always made by his mother, to whom this affair is understood peculiarly to belong. He himself expresses the utmost aversion to it; nor is it till after long remonstrances on the necessity of strengthening the family and tribe by the addition of new members, that a reluctant consent is at length extorted. When he is brought thus far, however, he leaves entirely to her the choice of an object, which, he declares, is to him a matter of perfect indifference.

Having made her choice, therefore, she applies to the parents of the intended bride, who is understood, in like manner, to consent merely in compliance with their wishes. So singularly has it happened, as Charlevoix observes, that men, who pay no deference to their parents on any other occasion, should, on this, where, above all others, it would become them to determine for themselves, thus resign themselves implicitly to their direction.[1]

---

[1] Lafitau, I. 564. Charlevoix, V. 421.

The same disposition is still more strikingly displayed in another custom, prevailing among many, formerly it is said, among all these tribes. For a year after the nuptials, although the parties live together at bed and board, no consummation is expected to take place. The appearance of pregnancy, during that period, would incur, if possible, still greater disgrace than, with us, attaches to the same event when occurring before marriage. By this behaviour, they wish to testify, that the connection had been formed from motives merely of prudence and duty, and was not prompted by any irregular inclinations.[1] Among many South American nations, the husband and wife, after the Spartan manner, have separate habitations, and see each other only secretly, and by stealth.[2]

In the case of female captives falling into the hands of these people, it is observed, that whatever cruelties they may be subjected to, their honour remains always inviolate.[3]

---

[1] Lafitau, I. 575. Charlevoix, V. 422.

[2] Lafitau, I. 575.

[3] Rochefoucault's Travels in North America, I. 179.

We may observe, however, that this quality consists rather in ostentatious indifference, than in any strict regard to the obligations of the matrimonial tie. Polygamy is permitted among many tribes; divorce may take place, at least by mutual consent; and, in cases of occasional absence, no disgrace attaches to the formation of a temporary union. The husband of a French woman at Montreal having set out on a journey of a few months, some Indian women remonstrated with her on the unreasonableness of not providing herself in the meantime with another, who could be dismissed as soon as the former husband returned home.[1]

It has been generally supposed, that in every form of savage life, and in this more particularly, the female sex is reduced to the lowest degradation, and treated with the most inhuman severity. There appears to me, however, reason to think, that this statement has been a good deal exaggerated. They are doomed, indeed, to constant and severe labour; for besides do-

[1] Hennepin, apud Bernard, Voyages au Nord.

mestic employments, the whole process of cultivating the ground is entirely devolved on them. With the exception of hunting, which gives scope to a daring and adventurous spirit, the men will not apply themselves to any mode of procuring subsistence. The warrior would consider himself as dishonoured for ever by touching the spade or the hoe;[1] and even the Indian women, on seeing some Englishmen labouring the ground, exclaimed, "what a shameful thing it was to see men doing women's work!" and offered rather to do it themselves.[2] Beyond this, I do not find that they meet with any particular ill treatment. Provided they perform the task assigned them, which they generally do with chearfulness, they are not liable to be beaten or abused; Lafitau says expressly, that an "Iroquois husband dare not quarrel nor beat his wife."[3] Nay, while in some respects they are despised and degraded, in others they enjoy a respect, and even a pre-eminence, to

---

[1] Lafitau, II. 79. [2] Long, 137.

[3] Purchas, IV. 1292. Lafitau, I. 585. Carver, 410. Bartram. This last writer declares, that he never saw an Indian strike his wife, or even reprove her in anger.

which they are altogether strangers in more polished societies. They are the sole proprietors of every thing in the house; the men have only their arms and scalps, and whatever the latter kill in hunting, becomes the property of the wife. They are even said not to consider her as bound to supply them with food, but if she sets down none, walk away without complaining to the house of a neighbour.[1] The matrons, as already noticed, have the sole direction in matrimonial concerns; they have the power, either to torture a captive, or to add him to their family. Every thing connected, either with the support or multiplication of the tribe, is entrusted to them. Nay more, they are the nominal heads of the nation; it is in their name, and professedly for their behoof, that all public business is transacted.[2] Even though this should be merely a form, it certainly is not one which would naturally occur to men by whom the sex was held in utter contempt. We may observe, too, that this deference and respect is

[1] Rochefoucault, Travels in North America, I, 175-80.
[2] Lafitau, I. 72, 464. Charlevoix, V. 397.

peculiarly conspicuous among the Iroquois, who, as being the freest and fiercest of all these tribes, seem to present the purest specimen of this form of society.

A few distinctions may, perhaps, solve this apparent inconsistency. Those fierce spirits cannot be supposed liable to any deep impressions from youth or beauty, nor likely to regard the sex with that tender interest, which, in a civilized society, is naturally inspired by those who constitute its choicest ornament. But as mothers of families, as managers of all domestic concerns, they are justly thought entitled to a high degree of respect. Their property in the household naturally arises in consequence of being the laborious producers of most of the articles of which it consists. The children, too, among all rude nations, are considered as peculiarly belonging to the mother. Her connection with them is more obvious and sensible; on her the whole charge of their rearing devolves; and in case of divorce, which is permitted in most of these tribes, it is with her that they remain. She thus comes to be viewed as the head of the family; and as nations consist only of a certain

number of families, each of which forms a sensible portion of so small a community, they become, by a natural transition, heads of the nation also.

In point of intellectual endowments, this stage rises very considerably above the foregoing. Besides liberty, which remains unimpaired, increased numbers, and great public events, combine in giving an impulse to the slumbering mind. The objects which occupy the attention, are both of greater magnitude, and less obvious to the senses. Instead of mere individual contests, great national affairs are to be transacted, which require foresight, deep thought, and extensive plans of conduct. The Indians of North America, from the river St Laurence to the Gulf of Mexico, an extent of several thousand miles, were all united by a certain bond of political connection. Embassies went continually from one to the other, on subjects, either of complaint, congratulation, or condolence; and they are said to have been no strangers to the art of employing these, as the means of procuring information respecting the condition of

an enemy.[1] Within, frequent councils, which are conducted with the utmost gravity and deliberation.[2] They are distinguished by original good sense, not refined, indeed, by any artificial cultivation; but, at the same time, free from the errors of mysticism and vanity. Their intellect, directed always towards real and important objects, is not liable, like that of the recluse visionary, to run into an eccentric and preposterous direction.

In the former stage, the multiplicity of little objects, among which the attention was continually divided, occasioned a quick, gay, and lively disposition; but here the objects being few, and of great magnitude, produce a deeply solemn and serious character. Even to the gratification of their wildest passions, they proceed with perfect coolness and sedateness. Occupied with great interests, and indifferent to the routine of daily occurrences, they have little relish for the pleasures of conversation; but they are great speech-makers.[3] When any im-

---

[1] Charlevoix, V. 399. [2] Ib. 365. Adair, 428.
[3] Colden's History of the Five Nations, I. 15. Rogers, 231.

portant national concern is to be discussed, all their oratorical powers are called forth. Their speeches on these occasions are extolled by some travellers in the most extravagant terms, and compared to the most splendid specimens of Grecian and Roman eloquence. Doubtless there is here a considerable degree of exaggeration. From more sober accounts, as well as from such specimens as I have met with, they appear to be distinguished by sound sense, a strict adherence to the subject, and a slow and deliberate train of ideas. They are full also of allusions to the objects of nature, particularly to animals, with whom their mode of life renders them familiar; which are introduced, however, rather by way of illustration than ornament. [1]

There is more of a religious character in this than in the foregoing stage. Their serious disposition, and habits of foresight, naturally turn their attention more towards invisible beings, and a future state of existence. Their ideas

[1] Rogers, 231. The most ample specimen which I have met with, is that given in the second volume of Colden's History of the Five Nations.

of the Deity are even, in some respects, more rational than might be expected. This appears particularly in their belief of his unity, and in the absence of temples and sacrifices. He is represented, indeed, according to their ideas of excellence, as fierce, cruel, and delighting in war. The Brazilians have a Deity (Aignan) of so malignant a nature, that the missionaries usually give him the appellation of the *Devil;* by whom, whenever they happen to offend him, they imagine themselves to be beaten without mercy. [1] Nor are they strangers to some rude ideas of a future state, where happiness is reserved for those, who have attained to their standard of savage merit; who are formidable in war, and terrible to their enemies. [2] Veneration for ancestors, almost a branch of piety, is cherished with singular warmth. This, among the North Americans, is testified by a custom, the most singular which exists among any nation. It it called the feast of Souls. A certain interval after death, the bones of their deceased

[1] Purchas, IV. 1337. De Bry, II. 120.
[2] Purchas, IV. 1336.

parents are dug up, and carried home, with testimonies of the most enthusiastic regret and affection. A variety of ceremonies are then performed, expressive of sorrow, and tender veneration; after which, these remains are again deposited in the earth.

Before quitting this subject, I must not omit some domestic vices, which seem to be the offspring of that profound indolence, to which they consign themselves during the intervals of violent exertion. The whole drudgery, as formerly observed, devolves upon the females; while the men lie sunk in torpid indolence, unless roused by the calls of hunting and war. When, however, the intervals between these employments become long, a dreadful vacuity is felt; existence becomes a burden, and they snatch eagerly at whatever may give an impulse to the animal spirits, and rouse those strong emotions in which they delight. And to such a source of gratification, whenever it presents itself, they abandon themselves with an unlimited excess, which characterises all their passions.

Among these means of relieving the burden of existence, intoxication appears to be the most frequent and fatal. No words can describe the

ravages (resembling those of the most dreadful pestilence) which have been made in North America, by the introduction of spirituous liquors. The moment they procure them, every thing else is forgotten; they abandon themselves to all the excess of the most boundless debauchery, never ceasing while a drop remains. They themselves are fully sensible of its noxious effects, and bitterly reproach Europeans for introducing among them this fatal poison; yet they never refrain from it when opportunity offers. These tribes, indeed, at the time of their first discovery, were unacquainted with intoxicating liquors, and owe their acquaintance with them solely to the intercourse of Europeans. Previous to their arrival, however, the South Americans, possessing a more fruitful climate, had acquired skill enough to extract, from some herbs of spontaneous growth, a fermented liquor called *Chica*, the making of which formed the chief employment of their women. They indulge in it, if possible, to still greater excess; but as its operation is less rapid and violent, the consequences are not so pernicious.

To the same burdensome vacuity of mind,

we may probably ascribe that rage for gaming, which makes them often stake, without hesitation, all the little they possess. Hence, too, probably arises their love of finery, and the delight which they take in fantastically adorning their persons. No European coquette can be vainer, fonder of admiration, or can spend longer at her toilet, than do these rude warriors. Of all presents, the most acceptable is a mirror, before which they stand, sometimes for whole hours, contemplating their uncouth figures with infinite complacency.[1] Here also the two sexes seem to exchange characters. This love of ornament is almost wholly confined to the men; the females, oppressed with labour, and attracting little regard by their external appearance, are not tempted to spend much time in embellishing it. From the low state of the arts, ornamental dress cannot be much employed; its place is supplied by painting, or marking, by incision, their naked bodies; and the wife, though not allowed to adorn herself, is employed in

[1] Volney's View of America, (Lond. 1804,) 395.

performing these services for her lord and master.[1]

The above sketch is drawn with a peculiar reference to the savage inhabitants of North and South America, now the only part of the world where great masses of such nations are assembled together. But there are a number of detached tribes in other parts of the world, which, while they agree in the same general character, exhibit besides some peculiarities so striking as to deserve attention. Of these the most remarkable seem to be the savages of New Zealand; those I mean who inhabit the southern part of that island, for the northern has already reached a higher state of improvement. This people is found wandering along the seashore in parties of from fifty to a hundred and upwards. These form separate tribes, between whom reigns the most direful enmity. When Captain Cooke, in his progress along the coast, landed at any one of these villages, their first petition always was, that he would exterminate some other in its neighbourhood.[2] They

[1] Gumilla, I. 296. Wafer's Account of Darien.

[2] Cooke's Third Voyage, I. 124.

lived in strongly fortified villages; they enjoyed no security day nor night, but were continually on the watch for some concealed enemy. But when one of these villages has succeeded in surprising another, they then give full vent to their fury. Nor are their victims, like those of the Americans, reserved for a tedious and lingering fate; but are devoured on the spot, and the festival celebrated by dances, accompanied with tremendous yells, and with every symptom of savage exultation.

So dreadful is the ferocity of their character; and yet, says Anderson, "we find them lamenting the loss of friends, with a violence of expression, which argues the most tender remembrance of them. For, both men and women, upon the death of those connected with them, whether in battle or otherwise, bewail them with the most doleful cries; at the same time cutting their foreheads and cheeks with shells and pieces of flint in large gashes, till the blood flows plentifully, and mixes with their tears. They also carve pieces of their green stone, rudely shaped like human figures, and hang them on their necks, as memorials of those whom they held most

dear."[1] Two New Zealanders, who had been carried over to New Holland, are said, every evening, at the hour of sun-set, to have begun a song of lamentation over their wives and children, whom they had left behind; and this lasted generally for half an hour without intermission.[2] A little boy of nine years old, whom Captain Cooke had carried off with him, continued, for many days, expatiating with tender regret on the happiness of his country and people, from which he was about to be separated for ever.[3] A more ardent character, a keener susceptibility, both of violent and tender sentiments, seem to distinguish this people from the Americans. The difference may probably be accounted for by the small numbers of these tribes, and their consequent proximity, which keeps their minds in a state of perpetual excitement. On the other hand, their subsistence is more easily procured by fishing, in which they are tolerably expert; while for vegetable food

---

[1] Cooke's Third Voyage, I. 124.
[2] Collins's New South Wales.
[3] Cooke's Third Voyage, I. 168.

they trust entirely to the spontaneous produce of the earth.

Their internal tranquillity does not seem quite so profound. Captain Cooke, during a fortnight's residence, saw a few quarrels, where the parties concerned behaved in a clamorous and disorderly manner;[1] but, in general, he says, they are mild and gentle, and treat each other with the tenderest affection.[2]

At his first visit they were honest, and, in point of female virtue, superior at least to the other inhabitants of the South Sea. A very few visits of the English, however, completely divested them of both these qualities.[3] Their character seems, in these respects, to have been of a less firm texture than that of the Americans.

Somewhat to the north of New Zealand, lie the large islands of Tanna, Mallicollo, and New Caledonia. A less fruitful soil, and less variety of intercourse, have, among them, retained the useful arts in a less advanced state than in the

---

[1] Third Voyage, I. 161.
[2] First Voyage, III. 450.
[3] Second Voyage, I. 130.

tropical islands. They have chiefs, who, however, unless in war, are destitute of any real authority. They were found by the navigators, who visited them, to be good-humoured and friendly, without those peculiarly engaging manners by which the Society and Friendly islanders were distinguished. Their strict honesty, and the impregnable virtue of their females, presented a striking contrast to the behaviour of the other inhabitants of those seas. Even during the short visits which Europeans have paid to them, there appeared reason to believe, from the ample provision of arms, and from other circumstances, that they carried on war with the utmost ferocity. They are supposed to be all cannibals. Any portraits of them which I have seen, are expressive of brutal fierceness, unaccompanied by that majesty and pride which are painted on the countenance of the New Zealand warrior.[1]

The ancient historians do not present us with detailed accounts of any nation in this state of society. The early Greeks and Romans, pro-

[1] Cooke's Second Voyage. Labillardiere.

bably even the Germans, were considerably farther advanced. In the corners, however, of the then known world, we obtain some partial glimpses of it.

The nations who inhabited the north-west division of Spain, are described as possessing all the characteristics of those we have now been considering; the same uncouth aspect, the same estrangement from all the habits of civilized life, the same fierce passion for war and liberty. Children slew their parents, and wives their husbands, that they might not fall under the slavery of the Romans. And when the captives, according to the barbarous rules of ancient warfare, were sent to execution, they were, by the astonished victors, heard to sing a hymn, even when fixed on the cross. These nations, accordingly, however poor and thinly scattered, were the last that yielded to the Roman arms. [1]

The description given by an ancient writer of certain African tribes, wears, at first sight, a very fabulous aspect. These men, he says, even

---

[1] Strabo, (Casaubone, 1587,) 113-14.

while they saw their wives and children slain before their eyes, looked on, as if it had been a matter of perfect indifference; and amid the greatest calamities and sufferings which befel themselves, they maintained the same unvarying tranquillity. This conduct is ascribed by him to stupidity, as that of the Spaniards had been to frenzy. In neither case, however, will there be any thing wonderful, if we suppose both nations to belong to the same class with the Americans, and these to be only symptoms of that stern endurance of suffering, which, among them, is the highest boast.[1]

It is with nations of this description, that the vast tract of country which went by the name of Scythia, appears to have been chiefly filled. The tribes, indeed, which immediately bordered on the civilized nations of Asia, had made greater progress; most of them went by the name of "Royal Scythians." A great proportion, however, was free, and, in the idea formed of them by ancient writers, this character seems to have predominated. It appears that scalping was practised by some tribes, and that others derived their name from the practice of anthro-

[1] Diodorus Siculus, III. 18.

pophagy; that their glory was all centered in the destruction of human kind; and that Mars was the only Deity invoked through the wide extent of these savage regions.[1] Their domestic character was very imperfectly known; yet a general impression seems to have prevailed of its being marked by moderation, probity, and uncorrupted good sense.[2] Coldness to the sex is enumerated among their most distinguishing characteristics; an idea which must have been derived from the Free Scythians, since the character of some of the southern tribes is the very reverse.[3]

If any reliance can be placed on the testimony of Dion, the Caledonians must have been marked by the same free and fierce character, so conspicuous in the other tribes which we have noticed. Nor is this improbable, since they appear to have been somewhat less numerous and civilized than the Britons, who, as will hereafter appear, belong to the stage immediately succeeding. So little, however, is known of

---

[1] Herodotus, IV. 59. Mela, II. 1.
[2] Strabo, 210-11. Justin, II. 2.
[3] Hippocrates de Aere.

them, and that little is so obscured by fable and controversy, that we shall hardly be justified in forming any very positive conclusions.[1] Nearly the same observations may be extended to Ireland; though with regard to it, our information is even more scanty; historians only noticing, in, if possible, still stronger terms, the deep barbarism in which it was plunged.[2]

We have now viewed the present stage in its completely formed state, when private contests have entirely ceased, and external hostility is raised to its highest pitch. But this is seldom the case. There are, as usual, many nations in a state of transition from the one stage to the other; nay, there appears even to be a sort of intermediate stage, which, besides a mixture of the qualities belonging to the two that precede and follow it, possesses some peculiar to itself.

The peninsula of *California* is considerably behind the rest of America in arts and population. The country is barren and wild; while the natives, wholly unacquainted with agriculture, obtain their whole subsistence by hunting,

---

[1] Mela, III. 6. Solinus, cap. xxv. [2] Strabo, 139.

or by collecting the fruits and seeds which nature spontaneously offers. They go almost entirely naked; and "their dwellings," says their historian, "are so scanty and mean, that an European tomb would here be reckoned a palace." [1] Their more sequestered situation, depriving them of the benefits of mutual intercourse, seems to be the chief circumstance which has retarded their progress; for those in the northern part of the peninsula, notwithstanding a less favourable climate, have been able to place themselves nearly on a level with the other Americans. [2]

These tribes already carry on war; and their hostilities are frequent and destructive. Yet they do not wage it with the same deadly fierceness, and unwearied perseverance; their revenge is not so rooted. Nor do they by any means display the same determined and unbending courage. Their resentment is kindled at the slightest injury; but it is quickly appeased, at least where there is any appearance of an effec-

---

[1] Vinega's History of California. (London, 1759,) I. 77.
[2] Ib. II. 92.

tual resistance on the part of the enemy. Yet they do not war, like the other Americans, by surprise and stratagem; on the contrary, before entering upon an expedition, they publicly announce their design. They advance to battle with loud shouts and cries, which are as necessary to support their own wavering courage, as to sink that of the enemy. But the least check breaks their spirit; and they then become as humble and submissive, as before they appeared fierce and domineering.[1]

Their domestic intercourse is said, like that of the other Americans, to be in general quiet and peaceable. They have frequent wrestling matches, however, in which an adulterous intercourse forms the shameful reward of the victor; circumstances which remind us strongly of the Northern Indians. In the more improved tribes to the north, these irregular practices have fallen into disuse.[2]

It is remarkable, that these tribes do not act with the same entire independence as the other

---

[1] Vinega's History of California, I. 67.
[2] Ib. I. 68.

free nations of America. There is no national council for the discussion of their common concerns. Their want of foresight and intelligence, renders them as yet incapable of such an institution. In their wars, their hunting parties, and in the collection of the spontaneous harvest which nature presents, they are under the necessity of submitting to the implicit direction of a chief, selected in consideration of his skill in these different pursuits. Here, however, his authority ends; as soon as the enterprize for which he was elected is over, this spontaneous obedience ceases, and he returns into the body of the people. [1]

In point of intelligence, these people seem to be more deficient than either of the stages to which they are allied. They have, to animate them, neither the bustling activity of the one, nor the great and important interests which occupy the attention of the other. They are said, however, to have that liveliness and turn for mimicry which distinguishes the New Holland-

[1] Vinega's History of California, I. 69.

ers, and even to amuse themselves sometimes with the representation of a species of comedy.[1]

A considerable degree of licentiousness prevails. The former state, we had occasion to observe, was by no means free from it. Now here the numbers have increased, without the acquisition of that dignity which, in the more perfect forms, raises the warrior above any degrading indulgences. The difference which is observed between the southern tribes, and those, more advanced, lying to the north, fully exemplifies the progress which has been made in this particular.

The Indians, who inhabit the banks of the *Oroonoko*, have their numbers depressed by inconveniences peculiar to their situation. This river overflows its banks so frequently as to render them, to a people destitute of contrivance, absolutely uninhabitable; and the only houses which they possess, are built on the top of wide spreading trees, by which its banks are over-

[1] Vinega's History of California, I. 68. 83. Lettres edifiantes, VIII. 79.

shadowed. Thus checked in their progress to a more civilized condition, they exhibit in their manners, a large portion of roughness and licentiousness. It seems to be from them in a great measure, that writers have formed their idea of the inhuman treatment of women, as being general among the Americans. It appears, however, to be partly connected with intoxication, and partly a remnant of former habits. Here too it is to be observed, that the tribes which are most numerous, fierce, and warlike, as the Caribs and Othomacas, (both cannibal tribes, which the others are not,) are also most noted for domestic tranquillity, for purity of morals, and orderly habits.[1]

The *Hottentots*, those at least in the immediate neighbourhood of the Cape, have been observed by us only when reduced to a state of subjection. This circumstance seems to have encreased that stupidity, that sluggishness, both of mind and body, which is characteristic of this form of savage life. The degrading servitude

[1] Gumilla Histoire de l'Oronoque, (Fr. Transl. Avignon, 1757.)

to which they have been subjected, ill calculated to inspire them with any taste for regular industry, leaves them little else to exist for, besides the mere animal gratifications of sleep and food. With regard to the free Hottentots, we have little satisfactory detail. The aggressions of the Europeans seem to have turned against them all the ferocity of those tribes, who, from this vicinity, have also been led into predatory habits, which would otherwise have been foreign to their character.[1]

The situation of the Kamtschadales is singular. Lakes abounding in fish, which they catch and dry with considerable skill, enable them to subsist in no contemptible numbers. The extreme severity of the climate, however, confines them, during half the year, to subterraneous caves, in which, while the wintry elements are raging above, a whole village remains pent up within the narrowest limits. During this long period, whatever inclination they may feel for fighting and contests, can be gratified only within themselves. Their manners are accordingly

[1] Barrow, Vaillant, Sparmann, &c.

represented as extremely rough; if they do not fight, scolding at least is a favourite amusement; and, at their marriages, a certain counterfeit violence is employed. The bride is surrounded by a band of matrons, through whom the lover must fight his way to her, which he does not always effect unhurt. An indolent mode of life seems also to have greatly encreased the propensity to every kind of coarse voluptuousness. When, however, they issue from their subterraneous abodes, war ensues, and is carried on with the same treacherous fierceness usual among the American tribes. They watch the moment when a hostile village is emerging from its winter habitation, and dispatch their enemies as they successively make their appearance. When any prisoners are taken, they torture and tear them to pieces with the wildest ferocity. They seem thus to combine in some degree the bad qualities peculiar to both forms of savage life, and present a character almost completely unamiable.'—The inhabitants of the Aleutian isles,

---

[1] Grieve's History of Kamtschatka. Russia, or Historical Account. Hist. Gen. des Voyages, &c.

and others bordering on Kamtschatka, are nearly in the same circumstances; nor is their character materially different, though their smaller numbers seem to have rendered it somewhat milder.[1]

---

[1] Russia, or Historical Account, &c. Levesque Histoire de Russie. See Note (5) at the end.

CHAP. I.

SMALL DESPOTISMS.

WRITERS on this subject have not failed to observe that man, even at this early period, is sometimes found subjected to a degree of despotism, of which the severity can hardly be paralleled in more civilized ages. One instance, indeed, that of the Natches, was here so striking, as inevitably to force itself upon the attention. It has generally been regarded, however, as a mere accidental occurrence, and as forming a singular exception to that freedom, which forms the general characteristic of savage life. But extensive discoveries, made since the time of these writers, have brought to light a number of new societies, in which the sovereign

meets with the same unlimited submission. On an attentive examination, too, of the accounts handed down from antiquity, we shall discover evident traces of the existence of these early sovereignties. Upon the whole, it appears to me evident, that this is a regular and constant stage through which man is destined to pass; and there is none, perhaps, which is more essential to the civilization of the species.

This form of government was, in North America, by no means confined to the Natches. It prevailed equally among the different nations of Florida and Virginia;[1] nay, it extended, in a greater or less degree, over the whole east coast of North America, from the Gulph of Mexico, to the river St Lawrence, without excepting even the bleak shores of Nova Scotia. The vicinity of the sea, by yielding subsistence with ease

[1] Charlevoix, VI. 209. De Bry, America, II. 29. 33. Purchas, V. 838. Brickell's Hist. of North Carolina, 297, &c. Stith's Hist. of Virginia, (Lond. 1746,) 54. Neal's Hist. of New England, (Lond. 1747,) I. 42. A chief of this latter country is said to have expressed the utmost contempt for the English governor, on learning that his authority was subjected to any limitations. Ib. I. 47. Charlevoix, V. 392.

and abundance, thus at once increasing numbers and diminishing the necessity of labour, accelerates the arrival of this state of things. In Nootka Sound, on the north-west coast, we find several numerous tribes living in a state of complete subjection. Most of the fertile and beautiful islands of the south sea; the Society, the Marquesas, the Sandwich, the Friendly, and the Pelew Islands, exist under this form of government. To them may be added the most fruitful and populous part of New Zealand. All these nations seem to possess, over the free tribes which we have just been considering, that moderate degree of superiority in numbers and arts, which indicates them to belong to the stage immediately succeeding.

In ancient history, too, we discover not glimpses merely, but distinct traces of this form of society. The most populous and civilized of the Scythian tribes, particularly the Massagetes; the Scandinavians, the Britons, evidently exhibit all its leading characteristics.

These characteristics, though not quite so simple and uniform as in the preceding stages, are

still very strongly marked. The following may be mentioned as the most remarkable.

The most profound and religious veneration for their chiefs; a milder and more pacific character; manners peculiarly gay, gentle, and courteous; an increased measure of industry; licentiousness in the intercourse of the sexes; cheating and thieving propensities.

Before proceeding, however, to illustrate these characteristics, it may be interesting to enquire into the manner in which this wonderful transition is effected, between two stages of a nature so opposite. The present, indeed, is somewhat superior to the former, both in numbers, and in abundance of the necessaries and comforts of life. But still the superiority is in general so small, as to bring the two almost into immediate contact. The Natches, and the Indians of Florida and Virginia, lived in a more fertile climate, and nearer to the sea coast than the Indians of Canada; but their progress in the arts was not materially different. A people, called Knistinaux, who inhabit to the north of the lakes, though in a severer climate, yet merely through the greater convenience of fishing, have

advanced into this state.[1] The same cause has led to it among the nations of Nootka, though wholly unacquainted with agriculture, and drawing nothing from the earth, but the productions which it spontaneously offers.

We have already noticed that war, at this early period, is rarely carried on with a view to conquest. Besides, the willing and chearful obedience which the chiefs receive, seems to exclude the idea of their authority having been obtained by violence. How then have men so proud, and so jealous of their independence, resigned themselves to a state of such abject subjection? What can have induced them to make a voluntary surrender of that liberty, which before seemed dearer than life itself? By what process has nature been able so rapidly to convert this wild and lawless democracy, into the extreme of religious and military despotism? The problem is not easily solved; for though we have accounts of the present condition of a variety of savage nations, yet we have nothing which can be called a history, nothing which

[1] Mackenzie's Hist. of Fur Trade.

exhibits them in a state of progress. The continued intercourse of Europeans with these rude tribes, may in time, perhaps, supply the deficiency. Meantime, by taking a general view of their actual constitution, of the manner in which the chiefs maintain their authority, and the grounds on which the people yield their obedience, we may form not improbable conjectures respecting the steps by which that authority was attained. What I shall offer at present, however, on this subject, is to be considered rather as hints or contributions, which may be of use to future enquirers, than as any attempt at a regular delineation of the process.

The foundations on which the power of these rude chieftains is established seem to be three—Admiration attracted by personal qualities; benefits conferred on the society; religious veneration.

1. The distinctions valued among a rude society are, in general, confined to bodily strength and prowess in war. There is no tribe among whom such merit does not command a certain degree of esteem, and entitle its possessor to be their leader, when they assemble for the pur-

poses either of defence or attack. As numbers increase, the consequent emulation will raise some individuals to a higher degree of excellence in these qualities; while admiration and reverence, which, like other passions, are felt most strongly in a crowd, will be more powerfully excited. And amid the vacuity of their minds, and the absence of other objects to attract the attention, any impressions of this kind are deeper and more lasting, than they would be in a cultivated society. Charlevoix observes, even of the fierce and independent North American tribes, that a man, who should have acquired their esteem in a very high degree, might easily persuade them almost to any thing; though it is extremely difficult to raise their good opinion to such a pitch.

Fortitude under suffering, the quality which is valued above all others, may naturally be supposed to enter into the calculation of that merit, which is supposed to entitle men to stations of dignity. In many tribes, accordingly, the man who aims at the rank of chief, must make good his pretensions by suffering a variety of trials, the most dreadful to which human nature can

be subjected. Scarcely does the savage enemy, when his fury is at its height, inflict on his victim more exquisite torture, than is voluntarily submitted to by the candidate for public honours. He is covered with blows and bruises; thousands of poisonous insects are thrown upon his naked body; he is placed in a basket over a slow fire, and roasted for several hours. During all these operations, if either by looks or gestures he discover the slightest sense of pain, all his hopes are at an end; he descends with ignominy to the station from which he had aspired to rise.[1]

This admiration seems most powerfully excited by *exotic* merit; at least when it is of that sensible nature which they are able duly to appretiate. Most of the Grecian states were founded by adventurers from Egypt, who could dazzle the rude natives by the display of arts before unknown to them. Thus Orpheus appears, by the charms of his music, doubtless abundantly rude, but new to their ears, to have been able to civi-

[1] Gumilla, ch. 35.

lize and establish his authority over a savage tribe; hence the elegant fable which represents the walls of Thebes as rising to the sound of his harp. The Jesuit missionaries represent themselves to have experienced something similar, while singing their hymns in the open air; when the wild natives flocked round them with symptoms of eager admiration, which reminded them of the fabulous ages of antiquity.[1] Hence, when the Europeans first landed in America, their vessels, their arms, the new and unknown powers which they displayed, rendered them objects of a reverence bordering on idolatry to the savage natives.

2. The next means by which a man may acquire influence, is, when he is able to perform some signal services to the society to which he belongs. A regard to their own interest will then of itself induce them to court his favour, and pay a certain deference to his will. But, besides this selfish consideration, the sentiments of gratitude and attachment, of which the savage breast is

[1] Charlevoix, Hist. de Paraguay, I. 351.

extremely susceptible, will be engendered by such services. Their continuance will render these sentiments habitual; and when a strong impression has once been made upon such minds, it remains long undiminished even after the cause which originally produced it is withdrawn.

Feasts and presents are the most obvious mode of courting popular favour; and they are accordingly expected from a chief. In some parts of America, he is said to possess influence, only "so long as he can keep the pot boiling."[1] An Otaheitan chief, being asked by the missionaries, why he distributed among the people all the presents he received, replied, that this was fully expected of him; and that if he did otherwise, he would soon cease to be a chief.[2] Stronger passions, however, are gratified by him who is foremost in battle, who destroys their enemies, and brings them home captives to torture and devour. The admiration of prowess, which is then mixed with gratitude, produces a sentiment

[1] Lettres edifiantes.
[2] Missionary Voyage.

of peculiar ardour.—More fantastical services have sometimes a superstitious value attached to them. A missionary, observing an Indian chief to have a very pale and reduced appearance, and enquiring the cause, was asked by the latter, how this could be wondered at, amid the sickness of so many of his people. The missionary, on requesting an explanation, then learned, that it was incumbent on the chief, for every member of his tribe who was indisposed, to lose daily a certain portion of blood; and that it was the faithful performance of this duty which had reduced him so low.'—The king of Loango was understood to have the power of bringing down rain at pleasure; and his subjects gratefully received it from him; though, in periods of long drought, they were sometimes apt to murmur at his continuing to levy contributions, while he withheld the means of discharging them.[2]

Here, too, the adventurer from a foreign country posseses great advantages, at least if that country be more civilized than the one into which he

[1] Gumilla, I. 260.

[2] Proyart, Hist. de Loango, &c. 120.

removes. He then has an opportunity of endearing himself, by communicating a knowledge of useful arts, of inventions for the convenience and comfort of life. This was an advantage possessed by the Egyptian colonists on their removal into Greece. It might have been enjoyed also by Europeans in their intercourse with America, had they not been generally disposed to prefer the authority of arms and violence to the milder one of address and persuasion.

We may observe, that both these modes of acquiring consideration are requisite chiefly at first, while the power of the chiefs is forming, and as yet imperfectly established. The impression, once made, is not easily effaced, but remains without any repetition of the means by which it was originally produced. When the chief is once firmly seated in absolute power, the display of martial prowess is no longer requisite in order to insure respect. Neither is he any longer under the necessity of making presents to his subjects; but, on the contrary, receives them in abundance.[1]

[1] Charlevoix, Nouv: Fr. V. 392. Missionary Voyage, 172. Turnbull's Voyage, II. 164.

3. The third mode of acquiring influence over a rude people, is, by becoming the object of religious veneration. Such a people are almost always superstitious; and where men are disposed to be dupes, impostors will seldom be long wanting. Accordingly, we had occasion, even at a very early period, to observe the skill and influence of jugglers. In a subsequent stage, they share the public esteem with the warriors; and though, among the fiercer of those tribes, they hold only a subordinate character, yet in such as are milder and more superstitious, superior skill may enable them to acquire the ascendency. Monotheism, as before observed, prevails generally in the preceding stage; if, therefore, the priest can make himself be believed the representative of the Supreme Power, he may appropriate to himself the honours and obedience of which it is the object. This supreme nature is seldom conceived as altogether spiritual, but is imagined to exist in some of those great objects of nature which act most powerfully on the senses. In the tropical regions, the sun is by far the most active and powerful agent in nature; and the worship of that luminary is far diffused

through the climates subjected to his influence. In America, is has become the foundation of a widely extended system of despotism and superstition. Besides Peru, whose extensive empire was ruled by "children of the sun," the sovereign of the Natches, and of other states formed upon the same model, had established an authority, the most absolute and uncontrouled perhaps that ever existed on the face of the earth.

This claim will be most readily acknowledged, when it is combined with the two others; when the person who advances it possesses qualities or powers which command admiration; and when these are employed in improving the condition of those over whom he aspires to reign. The founders of the Peruvian empire, which appears to have been a mere extension of this primitive sovereignty, are said to have instructed their subjects in agriculture, and to have exerted their influence in the most beneficent manner. The deified monarchs of early Greece are each celebrated as the inventor of some useful art. The Scythians even have a tradition, which represents their first king as being elected in conse-

quence of a golden plough, which was dropt to him from heaven.[1]

It is also advantageous, that the person who advances this high pretension should be a foreigner. It would not be easy for him, even among savages, to become a prophet in his own country: He ought probably, too, to avail himself of the first emotions of surprise and admiration which his appearance excites. Manco Capac, and his consort, are represented as coming from some unknown country; and the founders of most of the Grecian states were natives of Egypt. Hence the veneration which the Europeans inspired at their first appearance in the New World, till it was dissipated by their own ill conduct. and by the experience of their mortality.

In treating this subject, we are naturally led to consider the establishments formed by the Jesuits in America, which, in their nature and principle, seem to have borne a close resemblance to these primitive despotisms. Among the benefactors of the New World, who have in some measure re-

[1] Herodotus, IV. 6.

paired the crimes of Europe, this society must doubtless stand in the first rank. To this they are fully entitled by the hardships, the privation of every comfort, and the continual dangers to which they submitted, in the view of enlightening and converting the savage natives. They experienced, indeed, the duties of hospitality; nor were the Indians wholly insensible to their mildness of character, and disinterested benevolence. They were exposed to constant perils, however, not merely from the rude disposition of those tribes, and their jealousy of strangers, but more particularly from the ignorance, natural to uninformed minds, concerning the relation of cause and effect. Every disaster which followed their arrival, their preaching, or any of their ceremonies, was supposed to follow as a consequence. They were obliged to keep under lock and key all the ornaments of their chapels, to each of which some malignant influence was ascribed. The exhibition of one was supposed to be followed by disease and death; that of another by storms of rain.[1] As it was the constant practice

[1] Charlevoix, Nouv. Fr. II. 289.

of the missionaries to baptize children at the point of death, fondly imagining that they had thereby secured their eternal salvation, the Indians, who observed that baptism invariably preceded death, began to suspect that it preceded it as a cause.[1] On these occasions, putting the missionary to death, occurred always as the most prompt and effectual remedy. Even where more favourable dispositions appeared, their inconstancy was such as to render these little to be depended on. A missionary, who resided among an Indian tribe, having one day found them assembled, addressed them at great length, and seemingly with the happiest success. They declared themselves convinced of the truth of every thing he had said; faithfully promised to renounce their former irregularities; and, in particular, never again to eat human flesh. The good missionary then retired to spend an hour

---

[1] Ibid. II. 297. "This being the fourth chief that has died since our arrival, makes them say they never died so fast before; and, imputing all to the same cause, they say, that if we continue praying and singing, there will not be a chief left alive." —*Missionary Voyage*, 257.

by himself; but, as he was congratulating himself on these happy dispositions, was interrupted by a loud sound, issuing from the war-house; and, on running thither, heard them all joining in a song, expressive of their determination to be revenged on their enemies, and to *eat* every one of them.'

The missionaries were far from meeting with equal success in every quarter of the New World. Their efforts, in some places, were altogether abortive; and in others, were only sufficient for the formation of a few scattered villages. In Paraguay only, on the banks of the great river of La Plata, they succeeded in diffusing, over an extensive tract of country, and through a numerous population, a knowledge at once of pure religion, and of the arts and habits of civilized life. The states best suited to their purpose, seem to have been those which were either verging towards this form of government, or had recently arrived at it; before, however, it was

---

[1] Hist. Gen. des Voyages.

fully established, and, above all, before the establishment of a regular priesthood. In this case, they had already been enured to some degree of subordination; and when a Cacique had once been converted, the example was readily followed by his subjects.

The accounts which have been transmitted to Europe, of the peculiarly excellent character which marked these new converts, have, by some, been considered as fabulous and exaggerated. I see little ground for adopting this opinion. They appear to me sufficiently consonant to the general aspect of human nature in this form of society. The tribes, whom we are about to consider, are, in many respects, extremely amiable; now, the discipline established by the Jesuits in their villages, tended to foster all these good qualities, and, at the same time, to check the vicious propensities with which they are elsewhere too often accompanied. They were taught the means of supplying themselves amply with the necessaries of life; but were carefully kept from the temptation and view of wealth, as well as from all intercourse which could have a corrupting ten-

dency. Moral and religious ideas were alone impressed on their minds; all others were kept at a distance; while a powerful, but beneficent coercion, founded on the principles of Christian morality, deterred them from the commission of every thing criminal.[1] We may observe, also, that this character, even as it is most favourably represented, was very far from being the highest of which man is susceptible. It was merely that of innocent and amiable children. Its foundation lay in the most entire and absolute submission of their thoughts and actions to the will of their pastor. Such was their improvidence, that they were unfit, without constant superintendence, to manage even their own temporal concerns; unless narrowly watched, they would eat the oxen, after unyoking them from the plough.[2] Intercourse with Europeans proved always too hard a trial for their virtue. Although, therefore, they exhibited one of the most amiable forms of primitive society, yet

[1] Charlevoix, Hist. du Paraguay, 4to. 1756, Book V.
[2] Ibid, I. 247.

their character appears to have possessed neither the dignity nor stability, which can spring only from an improved and independent mind.

To the success which the missionaries experienced, one circumstance, connected with their peculiar form of worship, seems to have especially contributed. This was the magnificence of its external ritual. They themselves seem to have been fully aware of the empire which this circumstance gave them over unimproved minds. Though plain and abstemious in every thing which related personally to themselves, their highest ambition was centered in the embellishment of their churches; and at their religious festivals, they studiously assembled every object which was calculated to delight the eye and the ear. By a collection of flowers, of wild animals, and of artificial ornaments fashioned by the Indians, they are said, at little cost, to have rivalled the magnificence even of the mother country.[1] May not these observations furnish a hint to our protestant missionaries, who are now labouring

[1] Charlevoix, Hist. du Paraguay, I. 258-9.

n every quarter of the world with so much zeal, but hitherto with so little success? Unfortunately, they have been furnished chiefly by those sects which have thrown aside all regard to external forms, and which, confining themselves to the inculcating of abstruse doctrines, shun, as unlawful, every mode of captivating the senses. Now nothing, I conceive, can be so essential to the success of such an undertaking, as the employment of every degree of outward pomp, which is consistent with preserving in its purity the essence of religion. It is vain to hope acquiring an influence over rude minds, without a certain accommodation to their habits and prejudices.

A mode of civilization founded upon different principles has been pursued with success in North America, by an association of persons attached to the sect of Quakers.[1] Their plan seems to have consisted in bringing immediately under the eye of these people, the conveniences and comforts of civilized life, and the

[1] Account of two attempts towards the Civilization of the Indian Nations, (London, 1806.)

means of procuring them. With this view, a few of them went and settled in the Indian country, not obtruding themselves on the natives, but merely intimating their readiness to instruct them, if desired, in the useful arts. Moved by their friendly admonitions, by the example of industry set before them, and by the advantages which visibly flowed from it, many by degrees relinquished their idle and wandering life, and adopted the habits of civilized society. With this their instructors were for the present satisfied, without any immediate attempt to initiate them into the doctrines of Christianity.

For this change, the promotion of their own comfort seems a sufficient motive, enforced as it was by the difficulty of subsistence arising from the continual encroachments made on their hunting grounds by European settlers.[1] Yet it seems also to have depended very greatly upon the singular value and esteem which they entertained for the character of their instructors.[2]

---

[1] Baltimore Account, 21.

[2] Pennsylvania Account, 12, 15, &c.

This esteem seems to be founded on their kindness, their fidelity to promises, and a certain analogy with their own grave, deliberate, and systematic character. The influence, thus acquired, appears in a variety of circumstances, but particularly in this, that, through it, they were induced to relinquish the use of spirituous liquors, to which before they had been completely enslaved. [1] Such a power of checking them, even in the gratification of their strongest passions, seems clearly to indicate that, probably without design, they had established over their minds a very powerful, though most mild and beneficent empire. It is the more important to attend to this circumstance, since they themselves seem apt to consider instruction as sufficient, and not to be fully aware of the value of their own presence and superintendence. [2] These, indeed, will become more necessary as population increases with the increased means of subsistence; a circumstance which must induce the necessity of more power-

[1] Pennsylvania Account, 20, 26, 36.
[2] Ib. 11.

ful restraints, in order to check the disorders to which it naturally tends to give rise.[1]

Having thus endeavoured to form some idea of the circumstances whence this form of government and society derived its origin, I shall now proceed to illustrate some of its leading characteristics. Of these the most prominent is that extraordinary and unequalled reverence, with which its chiefs are uniformly regarded.

Man in a rude state, as we have repeatedly observed, is liable, in every passion, to run into extremes. Of this we have already seen instances in those of pride and resentment; and the case is the same with that of admiration. The untutored mind, when confined above all to a narrow round of objects, is in all cases liable to be affected, in an unlimited degree, by this sentiment. Any being, then, who possesses a striking superiority over others, especially if that superiority be beneficently exerted, becomes, as it were, its idol, and is worshipped with a reverence which knows no bounds. This propensity, indeed, with the devotional character which it assumes, may perhaps be considered

[1] See Note (6) at the end.

as a secret tendency of the soul towards, that Being, who is alone worthy of this unbounded affection.

We daily see the veneration with which such persons, above all when placed in rural and sequestered situations, regard men superior in rank, by whom they are treated with kindness. Now, in the societies we are now considering, the chief, who has once risen to distinction by personal qualities, or the supposed favour of the divinity, becomes the grand object on which the eyes of all are constantly fixed. There is not, as in a more cultivated society, any variety of objects to diversify the passions, or prevent them from all centering in this single point. Nor is the authority of the sovereign, as in the most absolute of subsequent forms of government, checked by any restraint of law, of custom, of public opinion; for these are not yet formed; nor is there any sentiment capable of rivalling that, which represents him as the object of supreme veneration. Hence the obedience, the blind submission paid to him, are absolutely without a parallel.

We may observe, moreover, that the despotism thus established is completely the despo-

tism of opinion. In the great states afterwards formed, a small body of men armed and collected round the person of the sovereign, may keep in awe extensive provinces, incapable of acting in concert, ignorant of each others sentiments, and deprived of the means of communication. But here all the subjects are collected within a small compass; they are equally armed,[1] and can assemble on all occasions with the utmost facility. The savage chief, however, without palace, without guards, and without attendants, sleeps safer, resting on the assured fidelity of his subjects, than the eastern monarch, surrounded by myriads of satellites, in the most secret recesses of his *haram.* The historian of Louisiana observes, that among all the monarchs he knew of, that of the Natches alone, was absolutely secure from all danger of rebellion. The chiefs of the South

[1] To this observation I have met only with two exceptions; one of the Suiones in Scandinavia; and the other, of a savage nation in South America. In both these cases, the arms were all kept in a place by themselves under the royal custody. Yet this is so different from the general practice, that I should suspect it to be rather a mere arrangement of convenience, than a symptom of jealous precaution. (Charlevoix, Paraguay, I. 71. Tacitus, de Moribus Germanorum, 44.)

Sea islands were thus seen by our navigators, without any external marks of royalty, going about unattended and unguarded, often paddling their own canoes; and were distinguishable only by the awful prostrations, and signs of profound homage, with which their presence was hailed. Advantage was frequently taken of this circumstance, on occasion of the thefts which were habitually committed by those islanders. The chief was seized and carried on shipboard, upon which the stolen article was instantly restored. This mode of procedure, however, demanded peculiar delicacy, and it was an unsuccessful attempt to practise it, which proved fatal to Captain Cooke. The whole narrative of that unfortunate event, affords a striking illustration of the strength of this passion among these savages. The anxiety and alarm which appear whenever danger seems to threaten their king; the eager enquiries whether any injury be intended him; and above all, on the fall of one of their chiefs, the intrepidity with which they faced those arms, which before had struck them with such terror; after standing whose fire, they rushed

forward and massacred all who could not effect their escape; all this indicates a spontaneous zeal and fidelity, which could not be the result of fear or compulsion.

Besides that obedience and submission which is common to them with the subjects of all absolute governments, other modes of homage are practised, peculiar to themselves, and eminently characteristic of their habits of thinking. Among the most remarkable of these, is the celebration of their prince's obsequies by human sacrifices. This too, in its original at least, is completely spontaneous, and is considered as a privilege of the first order. For this they chearfully sacrifice their own lives, and the lives of those who are dearest to them. They consider, as their first happiness, that of dying along with their sovereign, and being laid in the same grave.

Of all others, the most noted for this strange and savage custom, seem to have been the nation of the Natches. Among them, a certain number of persons, who had been born about the same time with their prince, were set aside to be his attendants during life, and his followers in death. To their number were added a

few, who, by long and earnest solicitation, had succeeding in having their names placed upon this list. All the wives of the sovereign also accompanied him to the tomb, with the exception of such as have infants at the breast; and they have been known to give their children to another, and even to destroy them, rather than forfeit this privilege. On the appointed day, all these persons assembled to grace the obsequies of their chief: and while every other countenance was overspread with mourning, theirs was chearful and serene. They walked forth, dressed in their gayest attire, and met their fate, dancing and singing, with inconceivable joy and exultation. [1]

This custom prevailed very extensively, not only in America, [2] but in other parts of the world. Ancient Scythia, almost in every thing the counterpart of America, possessed also this trait of resemblance. It continued to be practised even by the Mexicans and Peruvians. Among the former, every nobleman (chief or lord

[1] Charlevoix, VI. Lettres edifiantes, VIII. 13, 14. Pratz, Hist. of Louisiana, 354-7. [2] Ramusio, III. 53.

of some town) had at death a priest and several of his slaves buried with him. At the death of the sovereign, two hundred persons were sacrificed.[1] As the reverence for their princes gradually declines, this sacrifice may be supposed to become less and less voluntary, till at length compulsion becomes necessary.[2] When this is the case, the custom may be supposed approaching to its final abolition.

Among other tribes, life is sacrificed, even on slighter occasions. In the Canaries, when a lord came of age, or married, several of his people precipitated themselves from a high rock, in celebration of those happy events.[3] Every reader must have heard of the Schiek or Old Man of the Mountain, so famous in the time of the Crusades. It was upon this devotion of his people, upon the alacrity with which, at his command, they faced inevitable destruction, that he founded the system of assassination which rendered him so formidable. It is related, that one day, standing with an European ambassador on the brink

---

[1] Purchas, V. 877-8.

[2] Astley's Collection of Voyages and Travels, II. 537.

[3] Ib. II. 535.

of a precipice, he, with the mere view of displaying his absolute power, called to him a boy, who, at his command, instantly threw himself down, and was dashed to pieces.

It was customary with the Floridans to make their first-born a sacrifice to their king; and in the presence of an assembled multitude, the inhuman ceremony was performed, amid shouts and savage rejoicings.[1] Among the Ansicans, with whom human flesh is considered as the most delicious food, the nobles are said often to present themselves and families, for the purpose of being served up as a dish at the table of their master.[2]

Among other nations, we find customs less fatal indeed, but no less expressive of unbounded veneration. In Otaheite, on the death of the sovereign, the whole people take new names; as if, by this mighty change, they had all been converted into different beings. When he has entered any house, it is from that time sacred to him; no other person must set foot within it.

---

[1] De Bry, America, II. 33. Purchas, V. 848.

[2] De Bry, India Orientalis, III. 12.

Captain Cooke having landed at a village in the Sandwich Islands, found all the inhabitants lying prostrate at the doors of their houses; and on enquiring the reason, learned that it was in honour of a certain great man who had recently arrived there. The same navigator having invited the king of the Friendly Islands into his cabin, the monarch's attendants instantly took the alarm, and remonstrated against a measure which would enable any one to walk *above* his majesty. [1]

Among the ancient Ethiopians, if the sovereign lost a leg or an arm, all his courtiers thought it incumbent on them to mutilate themselves in like manner. [2]

We have now seen this authority of the savage chieftain under two aspects; while forming, and after arriving at its full maturity. But there is a third aspect under which it must be viewed, before we can understand completely the phenomena which it exhibits; this is that of its decay. Power, and, above all, despotic

---

[1] Cooke's Third Voyage, I. 265.
[2] Diodorus Siculus.

power, after subsisting for a certain period, inevitably sinks into a state of debility. Such seems to be the provision made by nature against its permanence, which would keep the human mind in a state of perpetual childhood; and for furnishing to a people, at certain intervals, the opportunity of acquiring such a measure of liberty, as circumstances may render them capable of. The sources of this debility are not difficult to trace. The chiefs, finding themselves in the undisputed possession of this high authority, no longer feel the same impulse to exertion. It is no longer necessary for them to display those qualities, or that attention to the interest of their people, which first raised them to distinction. They abandon themselves to indolence and voluptuousness. Poulaho, king of the Friendly Islands, had got so fat with indolence and eating, that he was scarcely able to drag himself along.[1] The sovereign of Otaheite rarely condescended to set his foot to the ground; he was carried about every where on the shoulders of his attendants. Even the lift-

[1] Cooke's Third Voyaye, I. 264, &c.

ing of food to his mouth was considered by him as too great an effort; and he left this office to them also.[1] After Pomarre's army had gained a signal victory over that of a rival chief, he himself was found at a great distance from the battle, lying flat on the ground, and holding fast by the roots of a tree, motionless with terror.[2] However powerful the influence of habit when deeply rooted, it cannot be supposed that, among a people who still retain somewhat of an active and warlike character, such a dynasty should not gradually lose their influence. The governments of the Sandwich and Friendly Islands, have already begun to be broken up by the successful rebellion of several chiefs, whose authority, notwithstanding the outward reverence paid to it, could not rest upon the same foundation of public opinion. As the royal power declines, an aristocracy is formed, consisting of princes of the blood and their descendants, who, in

---

[1] We were surprised to see so stout a man, perhaps the largest in the whole island, fed like a cuckoo. *Missionary Voyage*, 75.

[2] Missionary Voyage, 182.

process of time, multiply to a considerable number; of distinguished warriors; and of priests. Yet their authority, too, gradually declines, from the operation of the same causes which had undermined that of the sovereign. The people, at length, shaking off that blind submission to which they had resigned themselves, become sensible of their superiority in physical strength, and lay claim to a share of the public authority. A government is then formed of a free, active, and enterprising character, almost in every respect the reverse of the present. This, however, constituting a stage by itself, does not now come under our notice.

In forming an estimate of the three successive aspects under which this government appears, we may observe, that the first is too savage, too deeply tinged with the preceding ferocity; while the last is effeminate and licentious to an excessive degree. But the intermediate state, lying at a distance from both extremes, presents us with many very amiable and happy forms of society.

II. Nations, under this form of government, generally display a milder and more pacific cha-

racter. The production of this seems, indeed, to have been the grand purpose which it was destined to serve. To tame those fierce and haughty spirits, to inspire a relish for peaceful arts and social pleasure, and thus to infuse into them the first elements of civilized life, were objects, which, it is probable, could be attained only by a course of the most rigorous discipline.

Coercion seems to have some power in checking all the excesses to which the uncultivated mind is liable; but its influence is peculiar on the more violent and fiercer passions. So strong a degree of it, acting upon numbers comparatively small, may naturally be expected to produce effects extraordinary, and elsewhere unexampled.

We may observe, however, that a pacific character does not seem to be the immediate effect of this change, but rather the gradual result of its long continuance. At its first formation, and particularly in those governments which wear a martial aspect, it seems rather to exasperate the preceding ferocity. The warlike chiefs, whose authority rests on the fame of their military prowess, must be continually impelled to new

wars, in order to preserve or extend their reputation; and as in the minds whose admiration they have to gain, cruelty and courage are closely associated, the display of the one will often be resorted to, as the most likely means of establishing a character for the other. The queen of a savage nation in Africa was accustomed, it is said, to swallow large goblets of human blood; with loathing and reluctance, as she afterwards owned, but merely with the view of thus rising in the estimation of her subjects. Among the people of Nootka Sound also, with whom this state has every appearance of being recent, we find great domestic courtesy, combined with the most dreadful ferocity in war. To the English ships which sailed along the coast, the natives, coming off in their canoes, held up for sale human heads still bleeding, with symptoms of the utmost delight and triumph.[1] One chief slept always upon a pillow stuffed with the skulls of his slaughtered enemies. With another, it was customary to kill, every month,

[1] Meares's Voyage to Nootka Sound, I. 288.

a captive, with whom he feasted himself and his officers. The choice was made in a manner singularly inhuman. The whole number being placed in a room together, the chief was introduced, and, amid the most dreadful shrieks and yells of the victims, seized upon one for that day's sacrifice.[1]

But wherever these states bear the marks of having subsisted for any length of time, we find them assuming a more tranquil and milder aspect. War becomes only an occasional and transient occurrence, not as formerly the grand and permanent object of pursuit; and its place is supplied by peaceful arts, and social enjoyments. Where it does occur, indeed, it is carried on, as usual, with unrelenting fury. But still, in the course of this stage, we may trace the gradual cessation of those tremendous atrocities, by which the savage state is peculiarly distinguished. The Natches still burned their prisoners, but did not torture them, as the other Americans. Cannibalism appears to have prevailed originally over all the islands of the South Sea;

[1] Meares, II. 48, 49.

but to have disappeared nearly in proportion to the prevalence of this form of government. In the southern part of New Zealand, it is still carried to the utmost excess; but, in the northern, is practised with much greater moderation, the chief only being selected as a victim. [1]

In the Sandwich Islands, it was evidently well known, and seemed only recently to have been discontinued. If, however, it at all subsisted, the positive denial of the natives proved, at least, that they were become sensible of its enormity. In Otaheite the practice is completely obliterated; only some religious ceremonies still remain, which evidently prove that it formerly existed there. Of the ancient Scythians, the Androphagi (men-eaters) seem to have lived in a state of independence; we hear nothing of this practice among the *Royal* Scythians. Some trace of it, indeed, still appeared among the Massagetes; but with them, as before observed, it was meant, not as an expression of ferocity, but an uncouth testimony of filial affection.

Along with the fierceness characteristic of the free savage state, the attendant quality of courage

[1] Savage's Account of New Zealand, 35.

gradually decays; and towards the close of this state, a failure ensues, amounting even to pusillanimity. A remarkable difference was observed in this respect, between Otaheite and the other Society Islands, where subordination is more imperfect. The wars of the latter are much more fierce and bloody than those of the former, where it is said "they do not stand to fight."[1] Still greater was the difference between the Caribs and the natives of Hispaniola. The latter turned their backs at the very sight of the former; ten could put a hundred to flight.[2] Accordingly the Natches, and the Aborigines of the West Indies, were easily and speedily extirpated; while the fiercer savages of Canada and Brazil maintained their ground, or were subdued rather by the vices than the arms of Europeans. Even our British ancestors, though not absolutely deficient in courage, do not seem to have displayed that iron valour, which, in Germany, set bounds to Roman ambition, and crushed at length the mistress of the world.

[1] Missionary Voyage, 348.
[2] Ramusio, III. 2.

While the external character of these societies is thus milder than the foregoing, their internal harmony is, if possible, still more perfect. It seems to be produced here less by the ties of common interest, than by a general gentleness and amenity of character, which distinguishes all these tribes. A late navigator observes, that he never saw an Otaheitan out of temper.[1] The most liberal hospitality, the most friendly and social intercourse, universally prevails. And this quality is the more valuable, since it is not purchased by the existence, elsewhere, of a ferocity at which nature shudders. On the contrary, it is always the more conspicuous, as the society is less exposed to external hostility, and less conversant with military habits. The Friendly Islands, being all under the dominion of a single sovereign, are rarely engaged in war; yet this circumstance seems to have increased, rather than diminished, their internal tranquillity. Otaheite is, at the same time, less warlike, and milder within itself, than the other Society Islands.

---

[1] Turnbull, III. 86.

This leads us to a very interesting peculiarity in the present form of society. The American savage is, upon the whole, very mild and friendly; but this friendship consists more in actions than in words. It is accompanied with no lively emotion, no sensibility to the pleasures of social intercourse. It lies dormant, when no important services are to be performed. Without any relish for the pleasures of conversation, he wraps himself up in proud and stern taciturnity. Even his punctilious politeness is chiefly of a negative kind; it seeks rather to avoid any thing which could occasion pain or restraint, than to confer positive pleasure. But here, on the contrary, we discover the liveliest gaiety, the most winning and courteous address, and every expression of the warmest sensibility. The very names of the *Society* Islands, the *Friendly* Islands, are expressive of this amiable feature in their character. The European navigators, on landing upon these shores, not only had every mark of kindness lavished on them; but these were conferred in a manner so graceful and engaging, as won every heart. Even the Nootkans, though most ferocious in war, and bearing indeed that

character in their countenances, are said, in their intercourse with the English, to have displayed all those delicate and pleasing attentions which the highest refinement could prompt; while their whole conduct was marked by a friendship and sensibility, which inspired sentiments of the warmest attachment.[1] The character of the Sandwich islanders, too, appears to be peculiarly agreeable.[2]

We have already remarked the causes which, in the former stage, were productive of a grave and severe character. In the present, these no longer exist. The bulk of the people are no longer called to the councils of the nation; their minds are not now occupied with these high interests. No longer engrossed by a few great objects, their attention is called to individual concerns, to social enjoyment, and to the little courtesies of life. A court, where the distinction of ranks gives rise to attentions and the desire of pleasing, has been always considered as the school

[1] Meares, I. 187; II. 85-6.
[2] Cooke's Third Voyage, III. 229.

of politeness. Now, every one of these states is, as it were, a court. The extent is so small, that the presence of the sovereign and grandees is enjoyed almost constantly by the whole of the society. Nor do they wrap themselves up in oriental state and seclusion; they mingle habitually with the lowest of their subjects;[1] and a wish to please them is thus continually excited. And as the attentions which they receive are prompted, not by vanity or interest, but by the most sincere and impassioned affection, they communicate to the manners a warm and genuine interest, which is not to be found in the cold politeness of a civilized court.

III. An increased measure of industry.--Among free savages, as we have already observed, the whole drudgery, every necessary work which was neither animating nor amusing, was tyrannically imposed on the female sex. Under this description were comprehended agriculture, and all those rude manufactures which might be con-

[1] Cooke passim. Missionary Voyage, 325.

ceived necessary by such a society. While these were considered as an inferior object, and devolved on such unequal strength, it could not be expected that they should make any considerable progress; and accordingly they were in the rudest state imaginable. To remedy these evils, then, appears to be one of the purposes which was to be served by the discipline of the present stage.

The formation of an industrious disposition, of attention to private concerns, seems, in every case, to be the direct effect of a system of coercion. It produces a quiet, patient, steady character, favourable to those humble and persevering exertions by which alone external comforts can be accumulated. This direct effect of despotism is indeed powerfully counteracted by that insecurity with which it is attended; and hence, in a more advanced state of the arts, it is found eminently unfavourable to the pursuits of industry; it is in free states that the highest degree of this virtue is then to be found. But, among the nations of whom we are treating, this object is comparatively of small importance. The grand obstacle to industry, then, is not the inse-

curity of property, but the absence of all wish to acquire it. The low state of the arts presents no objects sufficiently attractive to tempt the savage to renounce either his habitual indolence, or those animating and adventurous pursuits by which it is alone interrupted. The member of a free tribe, occupied with the public interest, with objects of high and extensive importance, is apt to despise all others as trivial and subordinate. But in a state of strict subjection, when his mind at least, can be no longer busied in these great concerns, a solicitude arises for little interests and little comforts; those roving and restless propensities, which unfitted him for all steady application, are tamed, and a foundation is for the first time laid for habits of regular and permanent industry.

Independently, however, of the change thus induced on the character, the chiefs of these tribes are generally disposed to exert their authority in urging their subjects to labour. Surrounded by men who are eager to anticipate their every wish, they soon acquire a voluptuous disposition, an avidity for every means of sensual gratification which is within their reach. At the

same time, they are either the sole proprietors of all that their subjects possess, or are at least assured, that whatever may be going, they will come in for an ample share. Accordingly, wherever they possess any degree of activity, we find them eager to adopt the improvements of European art.[1] In some of the nations of Terra Firma, the chief assembled all his subjects in the morning, and assigned them their various daily tasks of hunting, fishing, and cultivating the ground.[2] Callicum, the chief of Nootka Sound, is described as busily going round, and rousing his people out of that supine indolence in which they delighted to indulge, to let fly the arrow, or to strike the otter.[3] Abba Thulle, in the Pelew Islands, is represented, in like manner, as urging his people to labour, and censuring the indolent: and it was with a view to the introduction of European improvements, that he was induced to make the

---

[1] Missionary Voyage, 100. Turnbull, ch. xv.
[2] Ramusio, III. 53. Gumilla, I. 265.
[3] Meares, II. 63.

painful sacrifice of allowing his son to depart with Captain Wilson.[1]

This effect is gradual, like all others produced by the operation of the cause we are now considering. In many of the earlier forms, indolence is still a predominant feature; though even in them a certain progress in industry is still to be traced. Thus among the Natches, as among the other nations of North America, the chief labour is still devolved on the females. The men, however, have begun to perform such operations as require the greatest efforts of bodily strength. Though they do not sow the grain, yet they prepare the ground for receiving it; and they will cut down the wood, though not carry it home.[2] The Nootkans do not cultivate the ground, but derive their whole subsistence from the sea. The barrenness of the one, and the fertility, if we may so express ourselves, of the other, naturally prompt to such a mode of life. The construction of their canoes, however, is commodious and elegant; and their

[1] Keate's Voyage to Pelew Islands, (4th edit.) 254.

[2] Pratz, Louisiana, 327.

fishing is performed with great skill and activity. The chiefs go out frequently to attack the whale, or to strike the otter; while the inferior orders pursue the ordinary business of fishing with nets.[1] The southern part of New Zealand is left almost in a state of nature; while the northern is covered with plantations of considerable extent. The Sandwich and Friendly Islands are cultivated like a garden; not a spot is left unoccupied; and the inhabitants of the former especially are, in the highest degree, active and industrious.[2]

It would appear to be in the course of this stage, that the transition takes place from the hunting to the pastoral state. The activity of man's disposition being turned from warlike pursuits to the comforts of private life, employs itself in acquiring an empire over the brute creation, and rendering it the source of a more secure and plentiful subsistence. Accordingly, with a few exceptions, (evidently owing to the vicinity of more civilized tribes,) the foregoing

---

[1] Meares, ch. xxiv.

[2] Cooke's Third Voyage, 237. 244.

stage is entirely composed of fishers or hunters; but in all the advanced forms of the present, (in the islands of the South Sea, for instance,) we find abundance of tame animals; and, in every subsequent stage, they continue to abound.

IV. In the particulars already considered, this form of society seems superior to the preceding, and the influence of its government decidedly beneficial. But it must not be concealed, that there are other points of view in which it exhibits a less favourable aspect. War being now less frequent, subsistence more abundant, and more easily obtained, pleasure becomes a reigning object of pursuit; and its excesses are no longer checked by that elevation of character, which is inspired by independence and public occupation. Drunkenness, indeed, unless among the chiefs, prevails less than in the former stage, being more adverse to the character of an absolute government. But it is otherwise with the irregular intercourse of the sexes, which is extremely prevalent: and this propensity, being accompanied by none of those mental associations, by which, in a more civilized society, it

is refined and chastened, is carried often to the most shameless and disgusting excess.

This character, like the others, takes place only gradually. In some of the governments which bear the marks of recent formation, the opposite quality appears almost as conspicuous as in the former stage: nay, in consequence of the higher estimation in which the sex is held, the marriage tye becomes more stable and respected.[1] Divorces, prompted formerly by pride and restlessness, become rarer, and the connection remains generally unaltered through life. The females of Nootka are praised for a laudable propriety of conduct, rarely observable among the inhabitants of those seas. Among the men, however, a custom prevailed of exchanging wives with each other; and such value was attached to female beauty, that wars were frequently undertaken on account of a handsome woman; a cause of hostility certainly never heard of on the lakes of Canada.[2] In the Pelew Islands, too, it is said that the improper ad-

[1] Pratz, Louisiana.

[2] Meares's Voyage to Nootka Sound, Ch. 253.

vances of the sailors were *commonly* rejected.[1] Such virtues, however, are soon undermined by the continuance of this form of government. Among the Natches, and generally over the east coast of North America, the unmarried females at least, were considered as free from all restraint, and lived in a state of almost indiscriminate prostitution.[2] It is a circumstance peculiarly disgraceful, that here, and elsewhere, this irregular conduct goes on with the entire sanction and approbation of their parents and guardians, who not only encourage them to persevere, but if any reluctance is manifested, hesitate not in having recourse to compulsion. In some states, all the unmarried females were kept in a house by themselves, ready to be presented to every comer; and this traffic was carried on under the immediate patronage of the sovereign, who reaped the fruits of it.[3] Nor did these irregularities form any bar to their marriage, but were rather considered as a recommenda-

---

[1] Keate's Account of Pelew Islands, 58.

[2] Charlevoix, Pratz, &c.

[3] Brickell's North Carolina, 297, &c.

tion. Where virtue was not understood to impose any restraint, their absence would have been supposed to imply only the want of those attractions by which lovers could be allured. The accounts given by our navigators of the Friendly, Sandwich, and Marquesas Islands, vary little from the above. In these states, however, the behaviour of married women was generally correct; and in the islands last mentioned, improper conduct was chiefly confined to the lower ranks; while the higher maintained their dignity, by a deportment quite opposite. But in the latter part of this stage, an entire and universal dissolution of manners takes place; and the higher orders, instead of distinguishing themselves by superior propriety, become only more dissolute than the rest. The Arreoy Society of Otaheite is well known. It is a singular proof of the violence of this propensity among those islanders, that it hurries natures, seemingly so gentle, into atrocities, the perpetration of which would disgrace the most savage tribe on the face of the earth. There too, as formerly in Virginia, and many other parts of the continent and islands of America, pre-

vails the shameful practice of men appearing in women's dress, and imitating their manners and employments. Among the ancient Britons, an institution is said to have prevailed, nearly similar to the Arreoy of Otaheite; and though less inhuman, it was, in this respect, more culpable, that it violated the laws of consanguinity, which in the latter were respected. A certain number of persons, commonly near relations, chose each a wife who was common to all; but the children were still reckoned to belong to the nominal husband. [1] Among the Massagetes, a complete community of women is said to have prevailed: any couple, without distinction, might retire into the interior of one of their waggons, leaving only an arrow stuck up, as a warning against intruders. [2]

If, even in the last stage, when completely formed, women were exempted from any undue severity, we may suppose their treatment to be still better in the present, when, besides the prevailing gentleness of manners, they have be-

[1] Cæsar de Bello Gallico. Dion (Leunclavii, 1606) 869.
[2] Herodotus, I. 215.

come the object of a very passionate attachment. Accordingly, it is in the free nations which have already assumed an aristocratical form, that this good treatment is especially insisted upon. As mild manners advance, the sex is, moreover, raised from that state of degradation to which it had previously been consigned. The men take upon themselves the rougher labours of the field, and leave to their partners only those domestic employments, for which nature designed them.[1] Women attain, indeed, to a state, not of equality only, but often of superiority, to the other sex. The female chiefs are from the first regarded with equal respect, and meet, when their situation entitles them to it, with the same prompt and unlimited obedience as those of the other sex. Maquilla, the chief of Nootka Sound, had given the government of a village to each of his female relations. One was ruled by his mother, another by his sister, and a third, which the English visited, by his grandmother.[2] There was an old lady in the Friendly Islands to whom

[1] Cooke's Third Voyage, I. 390-1.
[2] Meares, II. 5.

the sovereign paid the same marks of homage which he received from every other person.[1] Among the Natches, the man who married one of the female Suns, was held by his wife in a state of the most abject thraldom. He was to obey her will in every thing; was to allow her as many paramours as she chose, without murmuring, and without laying any claim to the same privilege himself; and at her death, it was fully expected that he should follow her to the other world.[2]

This emancipation of the female sex is accompanied by a singular change in their disposition. As men become effeminate and unwarlike, women, on the contrary, acquire a fierce and masculine character, and often, on great emergencies, become the prop of the sinking nation. In Otaheite, both Oberea and Iddeah are described as brave and warlike; and the latter, on an important occasion, displayed a valour far superior to that of her husband Pomarre. The same lady, when the English were

---

[1] Cooke's Third Voyage, I. 308. Missionary Voyage, 384.
[2] Lettres edifiantes, VIII. Let. 1.

offering her a number of presents, suited to the general taste of her sex, indignantly rejected every thing except a musket.[1] The last and greatest stand in Britain, against Roman ambition, was made under the command of Boadicea; who is said, in addressing her troops, to have reminded them, "that it was customary for Britons to be led to battle by women."[2] The exploits of Tomyris, Queen of the Massagetes, are little less celebrated. Even supposing her victory over the conqueror of Babylon to be fabulous, the invention of such a fable necessarily supposes a strong impression to have prevailed of her power and valour. Nor are there wanting other examples of ladies, who, in a similar state of society, have distinguished themselves by warlike atchievements.[3] The sovereign of Monomopata is said to keep on foot an army of five thousand females, who form the only body of troops on whose courage he can place reliance.[4]

---

[1] Missionary Voyage, 318. 322. Turnbull, I. 132. 146.
[2] Tacitus Annal. XIV. 35. Dion. 703.
[3] Ramusio, III. 54. 114.
[4] De Bry, Ind. Orient. I. 59.

These circumstances remind us of those celebrated societies, which, under the name of Amazons, are represented as consisting entirely of warlike females, to the total exclusion of the other sex. If, however, these have really existed, I am rather inclined to consider them as springing out of the free savage state. Sarmatia, which is said to have given birth to the ancient Amazons, was possessed by free nations, and we find some modern intimations of their existence in one of the Caribbee Islands. [3] Women, among these tribes, though they may not be absolutely ill treated, are yet reduced to a state of very mortifying degradation. When it happens, therefore, as it often does, that all their husbands set out on a distant military expedition, it seems not impossible that they may, at some time or other, have availed themselves of this opportunity to throw off the yoke. Whether they have really done so, or whether these societies are to be referred to fabulous history, forms a controversy into which I shall not en-

[3] Mela, III. 4. Ramusio, III. 3.

ter; only remarking the improbability, that the tradition should have prevailed so long, and so universally, without some foundation in fact.

V. The loss of that dignity of character which was formerly maintained, seems also to induce a tendency to the vices of thieving and cheating. Of their exploits in this way, so ample a detail is given in the narratives of recent navigators, that there can be little necessity for adverting to particular instances. It would appear, however, that their vices are chiefly generated by European intercourse, and that they exist little in their transactions with each other. Their generosity then is, if possible, still more boundless than that of the free savage tribes; [1] and notwithstanding their avidity for European commodities, they are said to be as liberal of them as of their own. They steal merely that they may enjoy the pleasure of giving. Captain Cooke observes, that no article which was either stolen by, or presented to, a native of the Friendly Islands, was ever seen a second time in his own possession. But though, unless in the more

[1] Missionary voyage, 323. 347. &c.

corrupted forms, they may have been strangers to this vice before the arrival of Europeans, yet the rapidity with which it then unfolded itself, seems clearly to prove, that there existed a strong predisposition to it. The inhabitants of Mallicollo, Tanna, and New Caledonia, were strictly honest; of which, in regard to the first, an affecting instance is related. Captain Cooke's vessel having set sail unexpectedly while the crew were trading with the natives, several were left of the latter, who had received commodities, without having time to make the stipulated return. After the ship had sailed to a considerable distance, and the transaction had been entirely forgotten, the sailors were surprised to see these persons rowing in pursuit of them with the utmost eagerness. On arriving, they delivered with alacrity the appointed articles, absolutely refusing to take any thing in return, and expressing the highest satisfaction at having accomplished their object.[1] The Caribs are said to have had so little idea of theft, as a thing which could possibly be committed by one of

[1] Cooke's Second Voyage, II. 33.

themselves, that on missing any article out of their houses, they were accustomed to exclaim; "Some Christian has been here!" [1] Even among these tribes, indeed, probity seems to give way before a certain continuance of European intercourse: but among those we are now considering, no symptoms of honesty ever make their appearance. The moment an European vessel arrives, all hands are busy; all vie with each other who shall pillage most successfully. The dexterity which they display upon these occasions, would authorise a suspicion of previous practice, were it not that vacant and uninformed minds acquire any art to which situation stimulates them, more rapidly than others which have previously been filled and occupied. To these thefts they seem to be impelled, not merely by a desire for the articles, but by the high esteem which they set upon the achievement. It is stated somewhere, that they often stole things which they might have got by asking. The latest visitor of the Otaheitans declares, that *they*, at least, are guilty of this vice, not to-

[1] Davies's Caribby Islands, 269.

wards strangers merely, but towards each other; that the whole nation, from the highest to the lowest, are thieves; and that the royal family practise this art with peculiar address and activity.[1]

This stage, in some of its ruder forms, seems, equally with the preceding, destitute of all religious ceremonies. As it proceeds, however, the timid and subdued character which it gradually inspires, strongly disposes the minds of men to the influence of superstition. Towards its concluding eras, an extensive system of worship is established, accompanied by a complicated mythology, and a regular priesthood; who, in the decline of the regal power, acquire a mighty influence over their credulous countrymen. In Florida, almost equal honours were paid at death to priests as to kings.[2] Pomarre, the sovereign of Otaheite, in the decay of his secular power, had found it expedient to assume the character of a magician; and the reverence which he commanded in this new capacity, was

[1] Turnbull.

[2] Charlevoix, Nouv. Fr. I. 44.

not inferior to that derived from his possession of the royal dignity. [1]

While the natives, at least of tropical regions, have scarcely houses for their own residence, they cannot be supposed to erect very splendid edifices in honour of their Deity. The only attempts, however, at elegant architecture, which are to be found among them, are prompted by this motive. The Natches, and other states formed upon their model, had temples erected to the sun; of whose structure, however, the best informed travellers give us no very splendid idea. In the South Sea Islands, the construction of a spacious Morai, is said to be the favourite mode of displaying royal magnificence. A more natural and pleasing homage is rendered, by forming a wide circuit of consecrated ground, filled with those objects of nature which tend most to inspire awe and mysterious veneration. Trees, from their wide spreading umbrage, form such an object; with them the Morais in the South Sea Islands are surrounded, and partly

[1] Missionary Voyage. Turnbull.

filled; and in the depth of sacred woods, were celebrated the awful and inhuman mysteries of Druidism. [1]

We may remark also, that the same sacrifice is now offered to their divinity, as formerly to the objects of their earthly adoration. The savage rites of the Druids are well known. In the South Sea Islands, too, particularly in Otaheite, the practice of human sacrifice prevails. It is resorted to whenever they think it necessary to appease the offended powers. The choice of the victim is arranged between the king and the priests, who, counterfeiting the voice of the Supreme Deity, demand a human being for this impious purpose. As there is no public force, however, to lay hold of him openly, he is surprised when off his guard, knocked down, and carried to execution. [2] The persons thus chosen are said, indeed, to be often men, whose life is justly forfeited by their crimes; and the practice forms then a precarious substitute for that criminal jurisdiction, which is unknown

---

[1] Tacitus, Annal, XIV. 30. Germania, 9.

[2] Cooke's Second Voyage, B. II. ch. 2, 3. Missionary Voyage, 338-9.

in these governments. But considering the very arbitrary mode in which the affair is conducted, we may reasonably suspect it to be often employed, rather in the gratification of private resentment, than in forwarding the ends of public justice.

Having thus illustrated the general features exhibited by this form of society, it may be proper to conclude with an enumeration of the most remarkable nations included in it, and a short notice of such particulars as may be peculiar to each.

The earliest observed, and most distinguished of these tribes, is that of the *Natches*. Their government is well known to have been a religious despotism, where the authority of the chiefs was founded on their supposed descent from the Sun, the Supreme Deity of their nation, in whose temple the sacred fire was for ever burning. The identity of this worship with that of Peru, seems to suggest, (though not with absolute certainty,) that the one was derived from the other, or both from a common source. Indeed I am inclined to believe, that these theocra-

tic sovereignties always spring from a foreign original. However much men may venerate one of their own countrymen, they will seldom go so far, as *really* to forget that he is human; now the homage here paid is real, not feigned.

This solar genealogy has extended far into North America, beyond the region to whose climate it is congenial. The Hurons believe their chiefs to be descended from the Sun, though they are far from paying them the same profound homage with their southern neighbours. Sun-worship has even penetrated across Canada, to a northerly tribe, formerly alluded to under the name of *Knistinaux*, among whom there is a temple erected to this divinity; an absolute monarch, also, a gay and licentious people, and every thing formed nearly on the model of the Natches.[1]

The nations found by Europeans, at their first landing, on the east coast of America, had more of a fierce and military aspect. There the characters of sovereign and priest were separated; and the latter is said to have inspired a reverence

[1] Mackenzie, Hist. of Fur Trade.

little inferior to the former. In Virginia, a species of little empire seems to have been formed. A sovereign there had thirty kings under him, by whom and by his subjects he was venerated as "half a God. It was curious," says the historian, "to see with what fear and adoration they obeyed him."[1] A chief of New England having made some proposals to the governor, the latter promised to lay them before the council, without whose concurrence he could give no final answer; upon which the chief expressed the utmost contempt for a ruler, whose power was subject to any such limitation.[2] In Nova Scotia, the authority seems not to have been quite so absolute, though there was still a marked difference between it and the free states immediately adjoining.[3]

All the nations now enumerated, seem, in their general habits and character, to have retained a strong resemblance to the free tribes in the interior. Occupying only a tract of land along the sea coast, they had always

[1] Stith's Hist. of Virginia, 58.
[2] Neal's Hist. of New England, I. 32.
[3] Charlevoix, V. 392.

these tribes for their immediate neighbours, and were prompted, by self defence and retaliation, to adopt similar modes of warfare. They all subsisted by hunting, fishing, and a certain rude species of agriculture; and had no knowledge of tame animals. Though the tasks of the women were somewhat mitigated, yet upon them chiefly the labours of the field were still devolved. The influence of this new form of government seems not to have struck so deep as radically to alter their character.

Most of the peculiarities of the nations of *Nootka* have been already noticed. They constitute, certainly, one of the rudest forms under which this stage any where appears. Their ferocity in war, their indolence unless when urged in a compulsory manner by their chiefs, and their total ignorance of agriculture and pasturage, seem to leave a slender distinction between them and the most uncultivated of the free tribes. It is only in fishing, and in the construction of their enormous houses, that they display any ingenuity. Yet so plentiful a source of subsistence does the former afford, that the village of Nootka contains 2000 inhabitants; and the sub-

jects of Maquilla amounted in all to 10,000. Those of another chief to the north were still more numerous.[1]

The *Marquesas* islands present, in one respect, a singular phenomenon. Subordination is still very imperfectly established, and most of their habits are those of the free savage state. Yet licentiousness of manners is there carried to a height scarcely any where exceeded. Our acquaintance with these islands is too slender to afford any likelihood of our being able to account with certainty for this circumstance. In the absence of better information, the following seems not an improbable conjecture. The first form of the savage state is, as already observed, considerably tainted with licentiousness, which increases as its numbers become more considerable. To the other bad qualities displayed by the inhabitants of the Navigators' Islands, was added an utter dissolution of manners. Now we may suppose, that in these small islands, where different tribes do not press so close upon each

[1] Meares, II. 6, 7.

other, external fear and hostility may have a less powerful influence. Thus, the second stage may not be duly formed; nor room left for the formation of that dignity and purity to which it is favourable. I must again repeat, however, that this is only conjecture; since there is nothing in the little we know respecting the history of those islands, by which it can either be confirmed or refuted. No less unaccountable is the singular beauty which navigators unanimously ascribe to both sexes, and particularly to the female, notwithstanding the drudgery to which they are subjected.

Of all these states, that of the *Pelew Islands* is perhaps the most amiable. It seems to strike the happiest medium between the two extremes, of ferocity on the one hand, of effeminacy and licentiousness on the other. Their cordial and generous reception of an English vessel in the most disastrous circumstances, and the interesting manner in which that incident has been narrated, have concurred in giving the most favourable impression of their character. It appears

[1] Cooke's Second Voyage. Marchand. Missionary Voyage, ch. 10, 11

certainly, upon the whole, to be exceedingly worthy and amiable. At the same time, we may observe, that there is nothing in it so very marvellous as has sometimes been supposed. They had a large share of the pilfering disposition so common in those seas; the virtue of their females was not always impregnable; and the prisoners, whom they took in battle, were butchered with the most cold-blooded inhumanity. Although, therefore, their virtues certainly predominate, yet they are accompanied by a considerable alloy of the vices and atrocities incident to savage life.[1]

In the *Sandwich* and *Friendly* Islands, we find this form of society in a far advanced state. A complete aristocracy is formed, where each inferior chief, in the absence of the one immediately above, possesses an absolute authority. A regular division has taken place into three ranks, nearly corresponding to our ideas of noble, middling, and lower; the dignity of the first being supported chiefly by the attachment and spontaneous submission of those beneath

[1] Keate's Account of the Pelew Islands.

them. Their active industry, and due division of it among the sexes; their amiable manners and taste for society; their very vices, (which are not however carried to any great excess;) all testify the advanced state of that process, by which the ferocity of savage life is tamed and polished.

Otaheite has proceeded still farther. Its progress has been doubtless aided by its greater extent, and by an exuberant fertility, which amounts almost to an exemption from the original curse. The perpetual gaiety of its inhabitants, their polished manners, their peculiarly insinuating address, have captivated all our navigators; who, combining these circumstances with its superiority in every thing by which life can be adorned and embellished, hesitate not to name it the "Queen of Tropical Isles." But this external appearance is false and flattering. On a nearer view, we find that the virtues, peculiar to this form of society, have lost much of their genuine character, while all its vices are exasperated to the highest pitch. The latest observer found reason to think, that their politeness

was generally interested and dissembled; and that they were in the habit of pilfering, equally from Europeans, and from each other.[1] They are entirely devoted to sensual pleasure; and in its pursuit, have abandoned themselves to a dissolution of manners, which seems to threaten the extermination of the race. Child murder is practised habitually by the Arreoies, and frequently by the other inhabitants, without any disgrace or punishment attaching to it. They are distinguished from every other rude tribe by their contempt for old age; a natural sentiment for a people with whom amusement is every thing, and who therefore set little value on a period of life, which has lost the power of feeling or bestowing it. The chiefs no longer inspire the same respect with those in the Friendly and Sandwich Islands. They seem to be completely luxurious and effeminate, and to pay no regard to the feelings and interest of their people; who, in their turn, are accustomed to complain, that their rulers are no better than thieves. Under these circumstances, it does not seem pro-

[1] Turnbull.

bable that their empire should be of long duration.

Otaheite exhibits the same distinction of ranks as the two groups mentioned above; and in consequence, probably, of the longer continuance of that distinction, the pride of birth is carried to a much greater height. He who is descended of a noble family, however destitute, meets always with the same respect as before.[1] And though their irregular manners lead sometimes to the formation of unequal connections, yet no offspring arising from such intercourse is ever allowed to live.[2]

In the *Ladrone* or *Marian* islands, this distinction is said to be observed still more rigidly, and the pride which it inspires to rise still higher. The nobles will not even touch one of inferior condition; they carefully avoid any approach to their dwellings; and if one of their number marries a person beneath him in rank, he is instantly put to death. They are full of dissimulation, timid, and under complete subjection to their wives, who, in cases of adultery, can

---

[1] Missionary Voyage, 325. [2] Ib. 215.

inflict on the husband, whatever punishment they chose, without being liable to any themselves. Their manners are also very dissolute. They seem thus to exhibit in an extreme degree, all the characters of the present stage. There is no supreme power, and the aristocratical dignity is accompanied by no authority, but that of persuasion. Each class lives almost independent of the rest. It seems probable that this government has been originally similar to that of Otaheite, but has continued somewhat longer, till the dominion of the chiefs ceased altogether; tranquility, however, being still maintained by that mild and timid character, which long subjection had induced.[1]

Easter island presents a more singular aspect. It exhibits, in the highest degree, the mildness, the licentiousness, the thieving propensities, which are characteristic of the present stage. Yet, according to the account given by Perouse, there is no authority or distinction of ranks whatever; they are all equal and independent, yet live in great harmony. There are here, as in the

[1] Callander's Collection of Voyages, III. 40. 56.

case of the Marquesas, no historical data to account for circumstances so uncommon. The most probable conjecture seems to be, that chiefs had formerly existed, who, in consequence perhaps of irregular practices similar to those of Otaheite, have become extinct; but not till they had continued long enough to impress upon the society the character of the present stage. Some ancient monuments, accordingly, are still discovered among them, supposed to have been erected in honour of their ancient nobility.[1]

Certain tribes which roam over vast plains in the interior of Africa, are said, notwithstanding their subjection to absolute sovereigns, to exhibit an unparalleled degree of ferocity. In inducing this character, two circumstances seem to concur, connected with their vicinity to nations more civilized than themselves. From them they learn the breeding of cattle, which enables them to multiply with a rapidity to which their civilization bears no proportion. The second cause is still more powerful. Opportunities of plunder are opened, so great, as often

[1] Cooke's Second Voyage. Perouse.

to tempt them to make it the sole source of their subsistence; a mode of life which necessarily supposes incessant and habitual warfare. The Giagas, above all, (if we may credit the accounts given by African travellers,) constitute a people artificially trained to a system of plunder and destruction. All their children are destroyed at the birth; the nation consists entirely of captives taken about the age of twelve, and bred up after their manner. They subsist by seizing upon the herds of their wealthier and less warlike neighbours; and the bodies of the captives, equally with their property, are made to serve them as food. There is thus no production, within the society, either of food, or of human beings; all exists by plunder alone. In them, however, the present stage is very imperfectly formed, since they have no hereditary kings, and claim a large portion of freedom; though they are kept under strict discipline by their general, who, if they shew the least symptoms of cowardice, has the power of putting them to immediate death. Among the Ansicans, human flesh is said to be exposed publicly in the shambles, and sold like beef or mut-

ton; and this people is described as the bravest and fiercest under the sun. In both cases, peculiarity of situation seems to have obstructed the pacific effect, which this government would naturally tend to produce. Both, however, are represented as mild in their domestic intercourse. The Ansicans, in particular, are highly extolled as loyal, faithful, and honourable; and a missionary hesitates not to declare, that they would make excellent Christians, were there any possibility of converting them.[1]

A more pleasing specimen is afforded by the Boshuanas, inhabitants of the city of Lectakoo, in Southern Africa. A vast surrounding tract of desert, exempting them from the alarm and tumult of perpetual war, seems to foster all the amiable qualities peculiar to this form of society. They appear also to be at rather an early period of it. The chief is regarded with filial veneration; there is no aristocracy to share his power; no priesthood, temples, or sacrifices; and the employment of agriculture is entirely devolved upon the women, as in the free savage

[1] De Bry. Purchas. Hist. Gen. des Voyages.

state.[1] The Barroloos, a tribe lying somewhat beyond, were, by them, described as a cruel and treacherous race. But it was afterwards found, that this representation was quite false, and that the Barroloos were, in fact, still milder and more civilized than the Boshuanas.[2] The report of the latter people, however, was doubtless conformable to their own experience; and we thus see, that these tribes, notwithstanding internal union, were, to each other, objects of mutual and deadly enmity.

To this class I would also refer the *Battas*, a people in the interior of Sumatra;[3] the natives of Madagascar;[4] those of the *Banda*, of the *Molucca*,[5] and of the *Maldive* Islands.[6] Some of these are extremely ferocious, and seem to border on the free savage state. I have stated them in what appears to me to be the order of their progression.

---

[1] Travels in Southern Africa, apud Barrow's Voyage to Cochin-china.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Marsden's History of Sumatra.

[4] Drury's Account of Madagascar.

[5] Voyages aux Indes.

[6] Universal History.

It will now be proper to give a short retrospect into antiquity, and to glean such imperfect accounts as have reached us, of nations which then existed under this form.

All historians agree, that in the different tribes which occupied South Britain, the form of government was strictly monarchical: and from the rude simplicity of their character, which, in this respect, exceeded even that of the Gauls and Germans, there can be no doubt that they were such early monarchies as we are now treating of. Their licentious institutions, the power and energy of female warriors, the complete establishment and high influence of the Druids, and the practice of human sacrifices, seem to establish an affinity to Otaheite, and to indicate, that among them, this stage was already far advanced. [1] They are also described as living in the most peaceable manner possible with each other. [*]

---

[1] Strabo, IV. p. 138. Diodorus Siculus, V. 20, 21. Mela, III. 6.

[*] Βασιλεῖς τε καὶ δυναστας πολλους ἔχειν καὶ προς ἀλληλους κατὰ τὸ πλεῖστον ἰρηνικως διακεῖισθαι, Diod. Sicul. V. 21. All the interpreters whom I have met with, consider this peaceable character as applying to the *sovereigns*, and thus make the passage expres-

Tacitus, when, in the course of his survey of the different nations who inhabited Germany, he arrives at the northern extremity, where it borders on the ocean, finds a class, of which "obsequious submission to kings," formed a distinguishing characteristic. Beyond these, in the peninsula of Jutland, lay the *Suiones*, formerly alluded to, among whom all the arms were deposited in the royal custody; and farther still were nations whom the historian, with more spirit than gallantry, declares to be sunk even below slavery, since they were governed by a woman. [1]

The *Royal* Scythians are described by Herodotus, as both the most numerous and the *best*.[2] This last appellation, which seems somewhat

---

sive of the rare occurrence of external hostility. (*Reges principesque hic multi imperitant pacem ut plurimum inter se colentes.*) But this is hardly compatible with other accounts, (Mela III. 6.) and besides, though an externally pacific character does seem, in a certain degree, to be the result of this stage, yet, that it should have been carried to such an extreme, seems hardly credible. I am rather disposed to understand it in the literal sense, as applying to the *people*, and as having reference chiefly to their domestic intercourse.

[1] Tacitus de Moribus Germanorum.

[2] IV. 20.

ambiguous, refers probably to their higher degree of civilization; especially following, as it does, the uncouth and savage description given of the free Scythian tribes. At the same time, they still retained a degree of fierceness, which seems closely to ally them to the latter. The sovereign, however, experienced ample veneration. Their most solemn oath was "by the royal throne;" and if the king ever fell sick, it was supposed to be in consequence of this oath being violated; upon which every person, suspected of such an offence, was instantly put to death. [1]

The Massagetes, from their licentiousness, and their subjection to female empire, would seem to have been considerably farther advanced. Their progress, however, appears to have been accompanied with little diminution of ferocity. The vicinity of more civilized and opulent societies, may, among them, as among the tribes in the interior of Africa, have led to a prolongation of this character. [2]

---

[1] Herodotus.

[2] Ib. I. 212-15. Strabo, XI. p. 353.

A nation, who, under the general name of Troglodytes, inhabited, at an early period, the shores of the Arabian gulf, are described as possessing two characteristics, which, combined with their rudeness, leave no doubt of their belonging to this stage. These are, absolute submission to chiefs, and the having their wives and children in common. No other circumstances of consequence are mentioned respecting them.

Greece, even during the period described by Homer, appears to be decidedly beyond that of which we are here treating. It can hardly be said that authentic history reaches higher; yet there appear to be circumstances, handed down by tradition, sufficient to authorize the belief, that Greece, at an era immediately prior, was actually divided into a number of little sovereignties, similar to those which have just come under our observation.

1. Most of the Deities worshipped in that country, are understood to have been originally the sovereigns of some particular district. Whether the apotheosis took place in their lifetime, or was merely a testimony of respect to their memory, it equally indicates the high veneration

with which they were regarded; while the extreme irregularity of their conduct, when contrasted with the dignity to which they attained, gives ground to suspect them to have lived in an age, when purity of morals was held in no peculiar estimation.

2. The names of almost all the cities of Greece are derived from a similar origin, and seem even to have changed with every successive monarch. Thus Attica was successively called Ogygia and Cecropia, from Ogyges and Cecrops. Sparta was, in like manner, called Lelegia and Lacedemon from two of its kings, and Sparta from the wife of the latter. Mountains and rivers, Eurotas, Taygetus, received also names from a similar source.[1] Hence it seems fair to infer, that the sovereign formed in these states the grand and prominent object, on which the eyes of the nation were fixed.

3. We are informed that Cecrops, who reigned at Athens several centuries before Homer, was the first who introduced into Greece the institution of marriage; and that, till then, the

[1] Meursius de Regno Laconico, ch. 1. and 2.—de Regibus Atheniensibus, ch. 3. and 7.

sexes had lived in a state of promiscuous intercourse. Now as such a disorder has not been found to exist in any of the earlier forms of savage life, but to be induced by the long continuance of these small sovereignties, there arises a strong presumption, that, to such a form of government, Greece then was, and had for some time been, subjected.

In *Cyprus*,[1] it seems to have lasted longer, and struck its roots deeper, than in any other part of the continent and islands of Greece. This island contained nine cities, in each of which a sovereign ruled with absolute sway, and indulged himself in every kind of luxury. Many of these sovereigns were queens, who met with a singular species of adulation. When they went out to ride, certain persons, who derived their name from the practice, were accustomed to place their shoulders in such a position, as to perform the office of steps, by whom her majesty might mount into her carriage. Nor are other characters wanting. Cyprus is peculiarly noted for the unrestrained indulgence of every species of unlawful love. It was here that Ve-

[1] Meursius de Cypro, II. 6.

nus had placed her favourite abode; that the most splendid temples were erected, and the most grateful homage paid to her. The persons most stigmatized by antiquity for irregular amours, Cinyras, Pigmalion, the Propetides, were Cyprians. Courtezans were even imported to a general market, which was held here for the supply of all Greece.

The stage, through which man has now been seen to pass, appears, if the expression may be used, to form the great *taming* of the human race, the process by which they are first rendered capable of being formed into peaceable and industrious societies. And as animals, when completely tamed, retain, through life, the character thus impressed on them, so man, after passing through this state of discipline, seems never to return to the same wild excesses as before. He is still *barbarous*; but he is no longer *savage*.

THE END.

NOTES.

Note (1.)

THE description given in this Chapter, applies chiefly to the mountain Laplanders, who depend for subsistence on the scanty produce of a soil which nature has doomed to perpetual sterility. The coast Laplanders are much more amiable, and display a considerable share of sensibility. Yet from the English edition of Acerbi's Travels, we should be led to suppose, that they live in a state equally insulated and remote from each other, as the Laplanders of the interior.[1] This circumstance puzzled me a good deal, till I happened to meet, in a late number of the Monthly Magazine, with a translation of part of the German edition, which is understood to be the most authentic. It there appears, that the inhabitants of the coast are, as might be expected from the greater facility of subsistence, considerably more numerous; that they are assembled in villages, which contain ten or twelve families; and that

[1] II. 103.

thus, they are rather to be considered as belonging to the last, and most amiable form of the primitive state.

Note (2.)

There are one or two other tribes, which are described as labouring under an extraordinary destitution of every thing which renders life comfortable or desirable. Among these, none seems more completely wretched than a Hottentot tribe, called Bosjesmans, situated in a tract of desert immediately beyond the colony. In a journey of eight or ten days, a party of travellers met with no more than fifty of them.[1] The intercourse held with them, was much too small, for forming any distinct or complete idea of their character. They are much more destitute than the Laplanders, with regard to the means of subsistence; and are exposed to dismal extremities of famine, which the latter, by means of their rein-deer, can generally ward off. This species of privation is of a more irritating nature, than the mere want of social intercourse; and hence we find in this tribe, a violence of character, rising sometimes to atrocity, which does not appear in the Laplanders. Some of them, too, in consequence of their vicinity to civilized societies, are said to have acquired the habit of subsisting by plunder. Upon the whole, till their manners are more minutely and carefully observed, no very certain conclusions can be formed respecting them. I am particularly surprised to find an allusion to polygamy as

[1] Travels in Southern Africa, ap. Barrows Voy. to Cochin-china, 382.

practised among them,[1] to which, one would have conceived, the difficulty of subsistence to form an insuperable bar.

Still more imperfect is our knowledge of every thing beyond the external appearance of the *Andamaners*. Major Symes, who touched at the island in his way to Ava, had no intercourse with any of the natives, except two females, who were caught and confined for some time in the ship. After their first terror was over, they became cheerful and talkative; and so scrupulous were they in guarding their chastity, that one always kept watch, while the other slept. At length, having found an opportunity, they leaped into the sea, swam on shore, and were never seen after. These people are described as living in villages; but it does not appear of what numbers they generally consist, nor are there upon the whole any sufficient data, by which their classification can be ascertained. They were observed to use shields, a circumstance supposed to be indicative of war. I should rather suspect from it the prevalence of individual contests; for shields are rarely used in savage warfare, which is all carried on by surprise; nor do I recollect any mention of them, unless among the New Hollanders.[2]

Note (3.)

This people is frequently, by Europeans, placed in the

---

[1] Travels in Southern Africa, ap. Barrow's Voyage to Cochin-china, 378.

[2] Embassy to Ava, ch. 1.

most unamiable light. Charlevoix represents them as so malignant, and so bent upon mischief, that they would cut away in the night the cables which held vessels at anchor.[1] But there is great reason to suspect, that this hostility to Europeans was but the natural return for their own unjustifiable conduct. It is mentioned by Captain Cartwright, that they consider shooting the natives as a meritorious action, and that he had heard several declare, they would rather kill an Indian than a deer.[2] This gentleman resided for many years on the coast of Labrador, during which, the natives and he lived in the greatest harmony, and he found reason, on the whole, to form a very favourable opinion of them. On one occasion, he represents them as displaying a warmth of mutual attachment, which would do honour to the most civilized society. He had carried with him to Britain, a number of Esquimaux, who, in their voyage back, were seized with the small-pox, which proved fatal to all except one. The scene which ensues on their arrival is so striking, that I cannot forbear quoting it.

"I placed myself on a rock near the water side, and Caubvick sat down a few paces behind me. We waited for the landing of the Indians with feelings very different from theirs; who were hurrying along with tumultuous joy, at the thoughts of immediately meeting their relations and friends again. As the shore would not permit

---

[1] Nouvelle France, V. 263.

[2] Cartwright's Journal of Transactions on the coast of Labrador, I. 6.

them to land out of their boats, they brought them to their anchors at a little distance off, and the men came in their kyacks, each bringing two other persons lying flat on their faces, one behind, and the other before, on the top of the skin covering. On drawing near the shore, and perceiving only Caubvick and myself, their joy abated, and their countenances assumed a different aspect. Being landed, they fixed their eyes on Caubvick and me, in profound, gloomy silence. At length, with great perturbation, and in faultering accents, they enquired, separately, what was become of the rest; and were no sooner given to understand, by a silent, sorrowful shake of my head, that they were no more, than they instantly set up such a yell, as I had never before heard. Many of them, but particularly the women, snatched up stones, and beat themselves on the head and face, till they became shocking spectacles; one pretty young girl, gave herself so severe a blow upon the cheek-bone, that she bruised and cut the flesh shockingly, and almost beat an eye out. In short, the violent, frantic expressions of grief, were such, as far exceeded my imagination; and I could not help participating with them so far, as to shed tears most plentifully. They no sooner observed my emotion, than, mistaking it for the apprehensions which I was under, for fear of their resentment, they instantly seemed to forget their own feelings, to relieve mine. They pressed round me, clasped my hands, and said and did all in their power to convince me, that they did not entertain any suspicion of my conduct towards their departed friends. As soon as the first violent transports of grief began to

subside, I related the melancholy tale, and explained to them, as well as I could, the disorder by which they were carried off, and pointed to Caubvick, who bore very strong, as well as recent, marks of it. They often looked very attentively at her, but, during the whole time, they never spoke one word to her, nor she to them. As soon as I had brought the afflicting story to a conclusion, they assured me of their belief of every particular, and renewed their declarations of friendship. Their stay afterwards was but short; they presently reimbarked, weighed their anchors, and ran across the harbour to Raft Tackle, where they landed and encamped: the rest of the afternoon, and the whole night, were spent in horrid yellings, which were considerably augmented by the variety of echoes, produced from the multiplicity of the hills surrounding the harbour, till the whole rung again with sounds, that almost petrified the blood of the brig's crew, and my new servants." *Journal of Transactions*, &c. I. 274-6.

Note (4.)

This people appear to inhabit a very wide extent of climate and country, and to follow a great variety of employments. Some subsist by hunting, others by fishing; some have rein-deer, and some subsist by pasturage.[1] As these circumstances vary, their character is doubtless very different. Some are described as mild and quiet, and as having submitted to the Russians without resistance. This

[1] Russia, or Historical Account, &c. III.

account was given by the Samoiedes, and probably applied to those of the Turguses, who bordered upon them, and shared their character. [1] The more southerly tribes are said to have made a very determined resistance, and to have prolonged the contest for upwards of forty years. It is probable, therefore, that the various tribes into which this people is divided, may belong to different stages, both of the primitive, and of the savage state. Yet the practice of duelling is represented as prevailing so extensively, as to give reason to think that the greater number must belong to that form of savage life to which it is peculiar. They are said, too, to be peculiarly rude in their manners, and to laugh at the sight of European civilities. They enter without speaking or saluting, and take, without scruple, the best seat that presents itself. They are, also, extremely superstitious; by which disposition, an old magician had profited so well, as to be in a condition of mainatining twelve young wives. [2]

Note (5.)

The view exhibited in this chapter, of the manners and character of the North American Indians, differs considerably from that recently given by M. Volney; it seems necessary, therefore, to explain the reasons which have led me, though not without regret, to dissent from the opinion of a traveller, who observes with such accuracy, and describes with such eloquence. Whatever M. Volney has himself

[1] Purchas, III. 551. Voyages aux Indes, I.
[2] Bernard, Voyages au Nord, VIII, 44. V. 339.

seen, is, I have no doubt, faithfully reported. But where he trusts to the information of others, it becomes necessary to weigh their credit, and to consider whether it can overbalance that of all preceding travellers, many of whom penetrated into the heart of the Indian country, and spent in it the greatest part of their lives.

I would first observe, that the Indians seen by M. Volney, were only a small party, and those exposed, in the highest degree, to the corrupting influence of European connection. He did not venture into their own country, but saw merely this party, who had come to an American village to sell the produce of their hunt, and exchange it for brandy. Sensible of this defect in his own means of information, he has recourse to *Long*, whom he conceives to be the traveller, that has given the most faithful report of Indian manners. What credit is due to this evidence, may be very shortly explained. Mr Long travelled in the character of a merchant, and carried on his trade in the following manner. On his arrival at an Indian village, he began by distributing a large portion of spirits, which kept them, for several days, in a state of the most furious intoxication. During this period, every species of disorder was committed, and it generally happened that several were maimed, and some lost their lives. Yet independent of these scenes, so disgraceful to the English name, the account given by Long, does not materially differ from that of former travellers. On recovering their senses, it appears that they uniformly expressed the bitterest repentance for their own conduct, and the deepest regret for their departed friends.

After all, I am inclined to think, that M. Volney's description may be just, in regard to the tribes in the immediate vicinity of the village where he resided. He there observed frequent quarrels, and was informed, that in their villages they dwelt "singly, in mistrust, secret ambushes, and implacable vengeances;" that the laws of hospitality did not exist among them.[1] Now these are symptoms of the first form of the savage state, to which it is very possible, that these tribes, probably in consequence of their connection with Europeans, may have fallen back several steps. And while this has led to internal disunion, it appears to have greatly diminished the ferocity of war. Speaking of torture, M. Volney says, "such is the scene which is exhibited *daily* in the country beyond the Mississippi, and *yearly* on the Wabash."[2] It is beyond the Mississipi mountains then, that the true Indian character is now to be looked for.

Note (6.)

No object has more strongly attracted the benevolent exertions of the present age, than that which aims at communicating to savage tribes the blessings of civilized life. With this view the African society has been recently established, an institution founded on peculiarly enlightened and philosophical principles. Few undertakings can be of greater importance; yet there is none which requires to be managed with greater delicacy and caution, or which, if unskilfully conducted, incurs more danger of exaspera-

[1] View of America, 396-7.
[2] Ibid. 459.

ting the evils which it aims at removing. The plan to be adopted in particular instances, must be modified according to circumstances peculiar to each, nor would it be easy even to point out any general rules which would not be liable to serious objections. It may be of some use, however, from the observations above made, on the manner in which man first emerges out of savage life, to collect such facts, as may tend to throw light on so important a subject. The most likely means of success must surely be by following the footsteps of nature, by imitating that process which she herself employs in accomplishing the same object.

The first circumstance, and one which must be constantly kept in view, is, that the intercourse which, for the execution of such a plan, must necessarily take place between Europeans and savages, has a tendency directly injurious to the character of both. In regard to the latter, this has been repeatedly observed; and it holds, also, to a great extent with the former. They still retain the passions incident to a numerous society, and are removed from the restraints, by which those passions were kept in awe. They must often be tempted to employ their superior information and consequent influence, in the gratification of private ends. And the facility of the women, particularly towards strangers, must be extremely apt to seduce them into a dissolute and licentious mode of life. It is frequently observed, that Europeans naturalized among savages, unite the bad qualities incident to both. [1]

[1] Lafitau, II. 290.

This evil, it is evident, can be remedied only by a careful selection of the persons to be charged with this important trust, and by establishing over them, if possible, a system of watchful superintendance. Peculiar success in this line of pursuit, seems to have been experienced by men, strictly attached to certain religious societies, the Jesuits, the Moravians, the Quakers; which may be greatly owing to the restraint imposed upon their conduct by zeal, and by a regard to the honour of their body.

With respect to that part of the evil which regards savages, the obstacle which it opposes is of the less magnitude, since it is removed by the same means, which are also the most effectual, in communicating to these tribes the benefits of civilization. These means are no other than those which nature employs; the establishment of a powerful degree of coercion, which at once checks the disorders arising from this intercourse, tames the ferocity of the savage character, and prepares men for the adoption of pacific and industrious habits. This coercion, however, must not be that of force; it must be founded upon that spontaneous veneration, with which the untutored mind is naturally inspired by the view of a superiority, which is beneficently exerted. The European, from his greater knowledge, from the arts and improvements which he is able to communicate, possesses ample means of rendering himself the object of such a sentiment. In this view, also, I am disposed to question the propriety of the resolution adopted by the African society, (doubtless from the very best motives,) of not combining with their endeavours to improve the condition of its inhabitants, any

efforts to convert them to Christianity. By an opposite system, another mode of acquiring influence over the savage character, might be brought into action. The character of *Pastor*, is perhaps, the best suited of any, for obtaining and preserving this empire of opinion; and it appears also to afford the best check against the excesses to which Europeans, in such circumstances, are liable. The mode of conducting such a plan must, doubtless, be very different from what it has often been. It must be combined with every possible means of improving their outward condition; it must be undertaken by men, who understand the savage character; in short, it must, as formerly observed, be modified upon a principle of accommodation to that character. I am aware of the difficulties which would lie in the way of a plan comprising these requisites; were it practicable, however, I am inclined to think, that no other method would be so effectual, not only for attaining its immediate object, but also for communicating to rude tribes the habits and enjoyments of civilized life.

FINIS.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by James Ballantyne & Co.

~~Human nature everywhere the same 12~~

wisdom not in numbers, 26

national character does not depend on climate 140

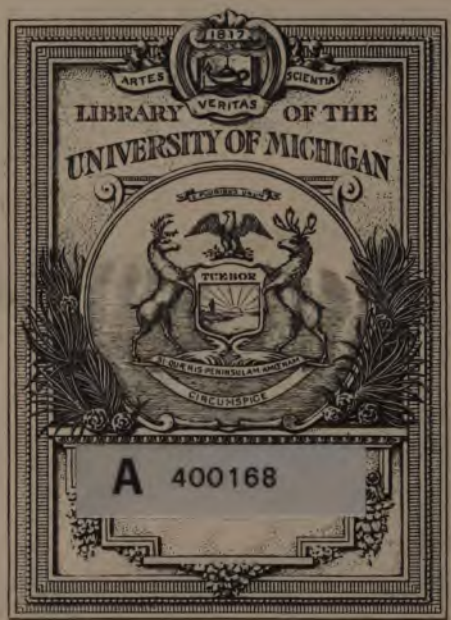
oscillatory tendency in human affairs 152

~~agricultural history 168~~

~~Savage from of society is without govt 230.~~

Polygamy 242

~~Savage history 330~~

DO NOT CIRCULATE

UNIVERSITY
3 9015 05